THE AGREEMENT OF THE Associated Ministers In the County of NORFOLK And City and County of *Norwich*, Concerning Publick Catechizing, and their resolutions to revive it in their severall Congregations.

Together with some Explanatory Discourses annexed, declaring the particular grounds, moving to the Agreement expressed in the severall Articles.

To which is also subjoyned,

An Exhortation to the Members of their respective Congregations, exciting them to a submission and mutuall assistance of their Ministers in this method of Instruction.

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1 Cor. 14. 20. *Brethren be not Children in understanding, howbeit in malice, be ye Children, but in understanding be you Men.*

Ego etiam Theologus sum, qui mediocrem usum, & peritiam sacræ Scripturæ variis periculis sum consecutus, sed non ita efferor hoc dono quin quotidie una cum pueris Decalogum, Symbolum, & decem præcepta mecum orem, & intento corde inspiciam non tantum verba transcurrens, sed etiam observans quid singula verba significent: & sanè cum hoc non facio & aliis negotiis occupor, sentio inde certum incommodum. Luther in Psal.

LONDON,
Printed for *Joseph Cranford*, and are to be sold at his Shop next door to the Castle, over against the Guild-Hall in *Norwich*, 1659.

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Associated Millers

In the County of

NORFOLK

City and County of Norfolk.

To the *Reverend*, our much honoured *Brethren*, the Ministers of the Gospell within the County of *Norfolk*, and City and County of *Norwich*, whether agreeing with us, or dissenting from us in their perswasions, concerning *Ecclesiasticall Discipline*.

IT is an excellent Rule, prescribed by the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, (in case of Brethrens dissentings each from other,) that *wherein they have attained, they should yet walke by the same Rule, minding the same thing*. By vertue of which we presume, to offer our Brethren our *Agreement* in the matter of *Catechizing*, being the *first fruits* of our long debates, and what we perswade our selves, will meet with a desirable acceptance from them. We cannot in the least doubt (*Dear and Reverend Brethren,*) but that many of you (however of differing perswasions from us in some things of Ecclesiasticall Order, or in regard of your remoteness of Habitations, not Associated with us,) have with an equall moving of Bowels with (if not exceeding any of) us, considered the sad effects, which the want of a *setled Discipline* in the Church; the *divisions* of Brethren in their Sentiments, concerning the things of Religion, and (we are afraid) our own too great deficiency to our

reſpective Duties, have produced in ſeverall parts of theſe as well as other Counties in this Nation. If both we, and our fellow Servants had not too long ſlept, the enemy (doubtleſs) had not *ſown Tares*, to ſuch an unhappy advantage. The conſideration of which, did at laſt *Alarum* ſome of us (more conveniently ſcituated for a correſpondence each with other;) to a ſerious conſideration of what (in this diſſetled eſtate of the Church of God amongſt us) might *by a voluntary Aſſociation, and mutuall Obligation* laid upon each other, be done to give a little check to that torrent of confuſion, which we ſaw every day like a ſtreame of *mighty waters* ruſhing in upon us, and upon the people for whom we muſt be accountable in the day of Jeſus Chriſt. Having therefore firſt agreed in ſome Rules of Order to be obſerved by us, for the managing of more generall, and particular meetings, for the beſt advantage to ſo noble an end, as is the preſerving amongſt us the *unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*; the firſt thing we propounded for the Subject of our debates, was an *uniforme agreement in the Adminiſtration of all the Ordinances of the Goſpell*, of which the Lord had made us *Stewards*: that having by a joynt owning of the Doctrine contained in the *Confeſſion of Faith* and *Catechiſmes*, adviſed by the *late Reverend Aſſembly*, declared our oneneſs of judgment in the things of God, We might likewiſe agree in the ſame practice, eſpecially as to publick Adminiſtrations, *ſerving the Lord with one heart, in one and the ſame way*; and by this meanes taking away all ſtumbling blocks out of the way of weak Chriſtians.

Upon a ſurvey of publick Ordinances, we found that ſome (which we muſt look upon as publick Ordinances,) had been for a long time diſuſed, and that ſome began

began to queſtion, whither there were any divine warrant for them: theſe were *publick Catechizing, Reading of the Scriptures, and ſinging of Pſalmes in the publick Congregations.* We reſolved to begin with the firſt, in our debates. And becauſe it is queſtioned by ſome, whether there be any warrant for it in holy Scripture, or any great need or profitable uſe of it; and others queſtion, whether any but Children be the Subjects of it: and others are again divided in their fancies, concerning the particular *forme* of Catechiſme, moſt fit to be univerſally uſed: And laſtly, (while the Magiſtrate pleaſeth to interpoſe his authority,) We perceived ſome at a loſs to determine, what could be done by us as Miniſters, to promove it, amongſt froward people, who ſhould not be found willing to ſubmit themſelves to this Method of inſtruction. We offered all theſe things firſt to the more private debates of our Brethren in their *particular Aſſociations*, who being firſt agreed amongſt themſelves, were deſired to ſend in their thoughts to the *generall meeting*; which reſults of their more private debates, when we had obtained from them, and came to compare them each with other, we found no difference in judgment amongſt us concerning the things, and very inconſiderable differences, in the Sentiments of particular Brethren, relating to the uniforme practice and exerciſe of them. What ſmall diverſities there were in the ſeverall Papers, were eaſily reconciled, upon a debate in a *generall Meeting*. And conſidering with our ſelves, what a prejudice the world (this part of the world eſpecially) hath entertained againſt this uſefull exerciſe, becauſe it is repreſented to them as a *puerile* exerciſe; and by reaſon of the *ſcandall* which others have brought upon it, as tending but to a *forme of knowledg*, or at moſt but to a *forme of*

godlineſs, and (in their opinions) anticipating the teachings of the ſpirit, (which many cant of in theſe daies, but wofully betray themſelves, that they know not of what they ſpeak, the ſpirit teaching men not by Enthuſianiſmes, but by and in the uſe of meanes, and much, (*Secundum quod noſtrus eſt Organum*) (to uſe *Eraſmus* his expreſſion) not uſing now adaies to teach men, to ſpeak diverſe Tongues, without learning the Rudiments of the Grammer, nor yet the *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, without meanes proportionate to that end. We ſay conſidering theſe things, that we might (together with our Brethren in other parts of the Nation,) beare a publick Teſtimony, to the uſefulneſs of this ancient exerciſe, and let our people know, upon what grounds we have ſo deliberately proceeded to the Agreement we are come to (through Gods bleſſing) upon our debates, as to the reviving the prctaice of this exerciſe amongſt us, As alſo how far they ſtand obliged to a ſubmiſſion to it: We thought fit to refer it to one of our Brethren, out of our ſeverall Papers to draw up, the Summe of our Agreement in this thing, with ſome *explanatory Diſcourſes*, containing the Arguments which prevailed with us, to enforce ſuch an Agreement from us; and an Exhortation to the ſeverall perſons, who are Members of our *particular Congregations*, to a juſt ſubmiſſion and performance of their duty, both in reference to us their Miniſters, and more eſpecially to their own ſouls, and the ſouls of thoſe who are committed to their domeſticall charge. Which being done, and the draught (as is here preſented to you, appproved by us) we thought fit to publiſh it to the world, as a teſtimony of our unanimity in this thing, and concurrence with our Brethren in other parts, and as a witneſs, both againſt our ſelves, and our people

ple too, if our people shall hereafter perish, *through want of* such *knowledg*, as may this way (through the blessing of God upon our endeavours) be communicated unto them. We hope our *Reverend Brethren* will not conceive every person in our Association, responsall for every particular passage in the *Explanatory Discourses*, or *Exhortation* annexed, much less for every failer the Press may be guilty of; but only understand, that we are joyntly agreed in the *Articles*, declaring our *judgment* and *resolutions* to practice in this thing, and to the substance of what is contained in the discourses annexed, explaining the grounds of our agreement, and the matter of the Exhortation, though we have not particularly examined every *Quotation*, or *accent*; or (if we had thought it considerable) possibly this or that *phrase* might have been altered by some one or other of us. The summe of what we here present is the Agreement of foure score and odde Persons in Association with us, and that upon due and mature deliberation. And nothing herein, having been imposed by us upon his Brother, by the *Magisteriall dictate* of any one, but being first propounded and debated, freely consented to by all present and concerned in it, as overruled by the dictates of their own consciences, and force of *Argument*, we conceive it both will & ought to make the deeper impression upon others, and will be conceived by all, who have concurred in it, more highly obliging to a suitable practice, of what in these debates they have either pleaded for, or at least by a silent vote consented to, refusing the liberty granted them throughout the debates, to produce their arguments, either against the whole, or any part thereof.

And we trust that we need not multiply words to our other (*Deare and Reverend Brethren*) in these Countries, who have not been equally concerned with us,

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in these debates, and this Agreement which comes forth as the result of them; considering that we know they are sufficiently instructed, how much they are concerned, that the souls of all in their particular Congregations, should not perish for want of *knowledg*. And for any to say, what have they to do with poore and ignorant persons? (as *Erasmus* long since noted) cannot be the voice of a good Shepheard; for no soule ought to appeare vile in our eyes, for which the Lord of glory vouchsafed to dye upon the Cross. We trust none of our Brethren will take it ill at our hands, that they have not been called into counsell with us, (upon which account we have only stiled it the Agreement of the *Associated Ministers in the County of Norfolk*, &c.) We trust the most of our Brethren know, that the doores of our *Association* have been open to all those who were willing but to declare, their consent to the *substance of the Doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, and Catechismes, lately advised by the Reverend Assembly of Divines*; *and their approbation* (so far) *of the Directory for Worship and forme of Church-government, so also advised and established by the Authority of Parliament, as that they would Preach nothing contrary to the former, nor practice any thing contrary to the two latter.* So that we are not justly to be charged with slighting of any of our Brethren, because as we conceive our selves obliged to conforme so far as might be, to the authority of the *Parliament*, in things wherein our consciences were fully satisfied; So we judging it reasonable (especially in such times of *reproach and blasphemy* as these are) that some common Test, should be put upon those, to whom we gave the right hand of fellowship in such an intimate degree of communion, could think of none more fit, then what (agreeing with the judgment

Non est quod bonus dicat Pastor, quid mihi cum sordido coriario, aut cum abjecto mendico, aut trioboli vi mulierculâ? Nulla nobis anima vilis videri debet, pro quâ dominus gloriæ mori dignatus est. Erasmus *in Ecclesiaste.*

Ord. 3d. Jan. 1644. Forme of Church government, 29th Sep. 1648.

of

of most sober Christians, and the best reformed Churches) had also the *approbation* of so grave and Learned *an Assembly*, and the signature of *publick authority*. Nor would we have our Brethren interpret us as if we thought our selves the only Ministers of the Gospell, in these *Countries* thus far agreed; We know and are perswaded, that we are not, but are aware of many, who have been hindred from this concurrence with us, only by their disconveniency of *habitation*, at such distances from us and the place of our generall meeting, that they could with no conveniencies personally attend these debates, and who we doubt not will (though as to the debates they were absent in the body) yet as to the practice evidence that they were present in spirit with us, and will rejoyce in what we here tender unto them. For any of our Brethren to whom this may be any rock of offence that they have not been present with us; we shall only speak unto them with allusion to the words by which *Gideon* once pacified the *Ephraimites*, contending with him because they were not called to fight with the *Midianites*. *What have we done*, in comparison of what you yet may do? If God shall put into your hearts to practice with us what we have agreed. *The gleaning of your Grapes of that nature, will be better then the Vintage of our debates*; in reference to the end which we have pursued in all that we have doue of this nature.

The generality of our Brethren being (as we conceive) sufficiently with us convinced of their duty in the reviving of this ancient and usefull exercise. We have nothing to do but only to stir up *their pure minds by way of remembrance*. That as they believe so they would also speak and do. If any of our Brethren shall think we have extended the obligation too far, in

bringing aged perſons under a duty of ſubmiſſion to to this method of inſtruction, and declaring our reſolutions, to deny the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, to ſuch as refuſe ſuch a ſubmiſſion; we ſhall (beſides what we have hereafter produced in our juſtification) mind our *Reverend Bretheren*, That we are informed by a *Reverend Brother*, who upon diligent ſearch had found it in the Records of the Biſhops Courts, in the City of *Norwich*; That Miniſters were anciently enjoyned to go from ſeat to ſeat *and to require of their ſeverall Pariſhoners, as well old as young, an account of their knowledg in the Principles of Religion, and both Miniſter and People were preſentable in the Eccleſiaſticall Courts, if either the one neglected his duty in inquiring ſuch account, or they omitted their duty in giving it to them.* It hath been the conſtant judgement of all reformed Churches, that ignorant perſons ought not to be admitted to the Lords Supper. Thoſe *Reverend* Perſons, who by command of King *Henry* the eighth, and afterward of *Edward* the ſixth, drew up that Book called *Reformatiõ Legum Eccleſiaſticarum*, determine that none ought to be admitted to the Lords Supper, *whoſe Faith was not perfect in all parts.* Our Brethren (we truſt) will eaſily be perſwaded, that in their ſpirituall fiſhing, (to which God hath calſed them) the little fiſhes are not thoſe alone whom their Nets are laid out for, he is doubtleſs a lamentable Fiſherman, who contents himſelf with encloſing the Fry within the compaſs of his Net. And if any of our Brethren, can obtaine ſo eaſie a diſcharge from their conſciences in the diſcharge of the great work of the Miniſtry, as to think the Preaching of a Sermon or two in a Week, is a due

Tit. de div. officiis. cap, 7. *Nam ad ſacroſanctam domini menſam nemo admitti debet, cujus fides omnibus partibus perfecta non ſit.*

due *fulfilling of the work ef their Ministry*, towards all but Children, we shall but desire of them to confute themselves, by taking account from some one or two of their People, (such especially as are of the poorer sort, and have wanted like advantages of Education with others,) how farre they are profited in a distinct knowledge of the Principles of Religion, by the many yeares paines, which they, or others before them, have spent amongst them in Preaching the word of righteousness; yea even in those places, where Preaching hath been mannaged with the best tendency, and to the best advantage for such an end, Oh! how dreadfull is the work of the Ministry, concerning which the great Apostle cryes out, *Who is sufficient for these things?* We cannot without trembling thinke of that passage of *Chrysostome*.

"I speake (saith he) no otherwise then I thinke, "and judge; I do not thinke that there are many "Ministers will be saved: but the much greater "number of them will perish: The reason is, be-"cause the work of the Ministry requires an ex-"traordinary Spirit; for he will meet with many "things that will take him off from his Duty: and "he had need of a numberless number of eyes to "see to the discharge of it. Do not you see "(saith he) how many things are required of a "Minister? he must be apt to teach, full of for-"bearance, faithfull as to the Word of God; "how great is this difficulty? The sinnes of o-"thers will be reckoned to him. I say no more, "if but one poore soul goes away not instructed, "his whole Salvation is hazarded by it, for the loss "of one soul is so great, as cannot be compen-

Οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχω καὶ διάκειμαι οὐκ οἶμαι εἶναι οἶμαι πολλοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τοὺς σωζομένους ἀλλὰ πολλῷ πλείους τοὺς ἀπολλομένους. Τὸ δὲ αἴτιον ὅτι μεγάλης τὸ πρᾶγμα δεῖται ψυχῆς καὶ πολλὰς ἀναγγάς ἔχει τὰς ἐξαγούσας τοῦ οἰκείου ἤθους καὶ μυρίων αὐτῷ πανταχόθεν ὀφθαλμῶν δεῖ, &c. *Chrysost. in Acta homil. 3°.*

 "sated,

"ſated: for if the Salvation of this or that indivi-
"duall ſoul, was judged by God of ſo great conſe-
"quence, that for its ſake, the Sonne of God muſt
"become Man, and ſuffer ſo great things; how
"great muſt the puniſhment be, which the ruine
"of one ſoul, will require for ſatisfaction. And
"if that man who hath contributed to the loſs of
"his Brothers naturall life, deſerves to dye for it; what
"doth he deſerve who contributes to his Brothers de-
"privation of eternall life?

Oh that this Meditation might ſo farre ſinke, both into our hearts, and the hearts of all our Brethren, who have been called to this Sacred Office, and ſo far operate, as to ingage both us and them, *To take heed to our ſelves, and the flock of Chriſt committed to our and their charge*, that we may neither contribute to their ruine by example, nor yet by Doctrine, neither by the Commiſſion of any thing unworthy of us, or Omiſſion of any duty incumbent upon us, but that we may *Preach the Word, be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long ſuffering and Doctrine, not ceaſing to warne every one with teares night and day. Nor ſhunning to declare unto all the whole Counſell of God*, warning and inſtructing them *from houſe to houſe*, not counting our life, much leſs our labours deare to us, *So that we may finiſh our courſe with joy, and the Miniſtry, which we have received of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to teſtifie the Goſpell of the grace of God.*

2 Tim. 4. 2.

Acts 19. 41, 27.

We know to whom we are ſpeaking, and ſhall therefore forbeare further to multiply words, to preſs a confeſſed duty. We have only further to beſeech our Brethren, to conſider, how conducible, to thoſe glorious ends, which both they and we

aime

aime at in the reviving of this exerciſe; *an uniformity in our practice*, as to the exerciſe of it, will be: at leaſt as to the formes of *Catechiſme*, which we have agreed, in uſing that firſt, which is contained in the *leſſer Catechiſme*, *adviſed by the late Reverend Aſſembly of Divines*, and publiſhed by *Authority of Parliament*, (as appears by the Order prefixed to it, dated the 15. of *September*, 1648. What reaſons have conſtrained from us an Agreement as to the uſe of that forme, Our Brethren will ſee in the following ſheets; and we hope they will appeare as cogent to them, as they have been to us. The great Apoſtle 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. hath taught us how conducible to the avoiding of diviſions amongſt us, it is, that people *ſpeake all the ſame thing*, in matters of this nature, and our Brethren will eaſily conceive, with us, how much it will gratifie, ſuch as are of weaker judgements and apprehenſions, to ſay nothing of the *expediency* of it, in reference to the *removals of Families*, out of the precincts of one Congregation, into the Precincts of others. In which caſes (eſpecially as to Children and Perſons of weaker capacities) the work will be *toties quoties*, to be again began, if different formes be uſed in ſeverall places. Having premiſed thus much, we leave our *Agreement* in this thing with the grounds of it, to the ſerious conſideration of all our Brethren, and fellow labourers in the work of the Lord, *Commending both their and our labours herein to the Lord, and the bleſſing of his grace*, and aſſuring them, that we have nothing more in our deſires, then that we might all walk together *knitted in love*, and preſerving the *unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*. Though we allwaies judg, it would be as great an errour in us, to ſell the truths of God, or

part with the purity of Adminiſtrations in the worſhip of God; to hold correſpondency with men, as it was in the *Romans*, to build their Temple of *Concord*, in the very place where their moſt ſeditious outrages were committed. And we are ſo far of *Caſſanders* mind as to think; *That alone to be true, and ſolid peace amongſt Chriſtians, which is conjoyned with the glory of God, and the obedience of his will, and is ſeioined from all depravations of Heavenly Doctrine and divine Worſhip.* In which we truſt alſo our Brethren are agreed with us.

G. Caſſander, De officiis pii veri.

ARTICLES

ARTICLES

Containing the

AGREEMENT

Of severall

Associated Ministers

Of the Gospell, within

The County of *NORFOLK*,

AND

City and County of *Norwich*,

Concerning

Publick Catechizing.

I.

WE judg, *That Catechizing by way of Question and Answer is the most accommodate way of teaching the Foundations of the Doctrine of Christ, and an Ordinance of Christ, under the Gospell, falling under the more generall Precept of* Teaching; *necessary, highly usefull, and expedient*

pedient: and we unanimouſly agree to revive the practice of it in our reſpective Congregations in conformity both the practice of primitive and lately reformed Churches.

2. We judge, That the Subjects or Perſons to be thus inſtructed, are the ignorant, whither old or young, though a difference of age or quality, may in point of prudence require a different Method, in dealing with them: We (accordingly) agree to uſe all proper meanes to diſcover ſuch in our Congregations, as be ignorant, and accordingly to deal with them.

3. We judge, That the uſe of a forme in this exerciſe (at leaſt at firſt is moſt expedient) and we (accordingly) reſolve to practice, making uſe of that forme, which we find in the leſſer Catechiſme, publiſhed by Authority of Parliament, upon advice firſt had, with the late Reverend Aſſembly; yet we ſhall not reſt in that forme: nor tye up our ſelves in that exerciſe, to thoſe Queſtions alone which we find there, but ſhall, as we ſee cauſe adde others for Explication.

4. We judge, That the moſt convenient time and place for this exerciſe, is the Lords day, and the place of publick Meeting for the Congregation; and we agree to practice it, upon the Lords daies, at leaſt ſix Moneths in each year.

5. We judge it reaſonable conſidering, the long diſuſe of this Exerciſe amongſt us, and the preſent ſtate of our Congregations, that ſuch as are above eighteen years of Age, and cannot be perſwaded, to come publickly to be examined; be incouraged to ſubmit to this inſtruction; by our gratifying their infirmity, ſo farre as to allow them a time for private conference; and we agree, to allow them ſome proportion of time weekly, or otherwiſe, when they may come to us; or we will go to them for this purpoſe.

6. We

6. *We judge it our duty, as to this exercise, to avoid all occasions of scandall, and accordingly agree, to examine, no young Women privately, without other witnesses, and to observe all tenderness, and prudence, towards others, especially Superiours, having respect to every ones Capacity, Education, Age and Quality.*

7. *We do agree, in case our people desire it rather, and be willing, by conforming to it to incourage us in such extraordinary labour, to set apart some time weekly, upon some week-day for this exercise, so farre as our other necessary occasions will give us leave.*

8. *We do judge Catechizing to be not only a piece of the Ministeriall duty, but also of the duty of all such as are betrusted with the charge and Governement of others, as Parents, Masters, and Governours of Schooles: and we do agree accordingly, to press it, upon all such within the Precincts of our Congregations.*

9. *In case there shall be found, within the Precincts of our Congregations, any concerning whom we shall not have a reasonable ground, to presume them competently instructed in the Principles of Religion) who, being in their own power, or under the governement of others, who shall refuse to be thus instructed by us, or by those under whose governement they are; We do agree in our administrations of the Lords Supper, to deale with such, as persons that are ignorant. Or in case there shall be found any trusted with the charge, and governement of others, who (being able) shall refuse, thus to instruct those under their charge, and after admonition persist in such refusall, either themselves*

to inſtruct them, or to ſend them to us to be ſo inſtructed. We do judge it matter of ſcandall in ſuch governours, and ſhall accordingly deale with ſuch (in our Adminiſtrations of the Lords Supper) as perſons living under the neglect of a known duty.

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Having thus far expressed our Agreement in Judgment concerning *Catechizing* and *Resolutions*, as to the reviving of the practice of this piece of our Ministeriall duty: That we may not seem to obtrude any thing upon our Brethren, without just and sufficient reasons: We have thought fit (in the following Chapters) to subjoyne, those reasons which have prevailed with us to the aforementioned *Agreement*.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Nature of Catechizing. The Divine warrant for it. The Expediency of that way of teaching. The Ancient usage of it in the Church of God, and the present necessity of reviving it in our Congregations.

IT is a Rule fit to be observed in all matters both of Dispute and Treatise, to begin with the Explication of Terms. The Term *Catechizing* is properly of a Greek extraction. The *Greek* word from whence it is derived, properly signifies *to sound into a mans eare* what we would have him to understand. The word is often used in the New Testament, *Luke* 1.4. *Acts* 18.25. & 21. 24. *Rom.* 2. 18. 1 *Cor.* 14. 19. *Gal.* 6. 6. from the comparing of which Texts together, it may be observed, that it signifies *a teaching by a lively voice*, opposed to that which is by *writing*. And this signification of the word

πρὸς τὸ ὀρθῶς διδάσκειν πρῶτον δεῖ ἐξετάζειν τὰ ὀνόματα.

Institutio quæ fit vivâ voce aures circumsonantes. Alsted.

is evident from all ancient Writers: thus the Translator of *Clem. Alex.* ordinarily interprets it.

Ea institutio quæ est ex auditione.

But the word taken in a more strict and proper sense, hath been used to denote a more peculiar kind of teaching, restrained both as to the *matter* taught, and the manner of teaching. As to the *matter taught*, it denotes *instruction in the first Principles of any knowledg*: And in Ecclesiasticall usage, an instruction in the first Principles of Religion, which the Apostle cals *the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*. Heb. 6. 1. For as in every *Art* and *Science*, so also in *Religion*, there are the first grounds and Principles, and then the larger deductions and more remote conclusions; The Apostle cals the first, *milk*, the latter, *strong meate*, the first fit for those whom he cals *Babes in Christ*: the second for such as are *perfect* (in his sense) And accordingly there is a twofold teaching, *the first*, *per modum*, ἐισαγωγῆς τῶν στοιχουμένων, which we call Catechizing: *the second*, *per modum*, διδασκαλίας, by way of further instruction, which *Grotius* thinks is implyed by the two words μαθητεύειν, and διδάσκειν, used *Mat.* 18. 20. *Luke* 1. 4. which distinction some of the Ancients seem also to have noted betwixt Catechizing and Preaching.

Τὸ κήρυγμα ἐστιν ἁπλοϊστέρων λεγόμενον. *Clem. Alex. in Pædagogo. Vid. Erasm. præf. in Lucam. Grot. in Luc.* 2. 18.

As to the *manner*, Catechizing seems to imply such a kind of teaching, as is

1. *By a lively voice*, by word of mouth, not by writing. Thus the term is used in Scripture, *Luke* 1. 3, 4. (compared together,) Hence the Hebrew word expressing it, comes from a root which signifieth *to hear*. And those in the Primitive Church who were thus instructed were called *Audientes*, Hearers.

ἠχὼ *Sonus reciprocus, vox reciproca. Vid. Cypr Epist. ad Jovianum, &c. præm. Concil. Carthag.*

2. It signifies such a kind of teaching as is by way of *Dialogue*, or Questions, and Answers; after the manner of an *Eccho*. Where there is a double sound direct, and reflex. So Catechizing consists of two integrall parts: *The proposall of interrogatories from the teacher*: and the *return of an Answer from the learner*. Such was the examination of the *Adulti* in the Primitive Church before *Baptism*.

Baptism. Of which *Philip* gives us a president, *Acts* 8. 17. and that phrase which is used by *Peter*, *The Answer of a good conscience*, 1 *Peter* 3. 21. is thought to referre to it.

It is thought the Apostles themselves ordinarily used this way of instruction. It is certain, that this way of teaching was early used in the Church of Christ. (of which more hereafter.)

Apostolica Catechizandi ratio cujus speciem in mysteriis Baptismi adhuc retinent Ecclesia interrogationibus & responsionibus constabat. Vid. Præfat. ad Rom. Catechism.

3. It signifies *A teaching by frequent Repetition, and inculcation* of the same things, and thus fitly answers the Hebrew word, used *Deut.* 6. 7. Hence *Zepporus* makes the work of Catechizing to consist of a double act. *Actus instillandi & repetendi vel dictata reposcendi.* Bishop *Andrews* cites out of *Clemens* this description of it, Κατηχήσις ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη θεοσεβείας τοῖς ἀπείροις ἠδὲ παραδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ κατεχήτου, καὶ πάλιν ἀποδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ αὐτῶν.

Bp *And.* On the Commadments.

By what hath been hitherto said, sufficiently appeares, what we mean by Catechizing, *viz. That kind of teaching by which the ignorant are instructed in the first Rudiments of Religion, by the lively voice of him that teacheth, familiarly instructing them, by way of Question and Answer, in which the teacher hath a liberty frequently to inculcate and repeat the same things again and again, for the advantage of those who are taught.* And thus it standeth distinguished from Preaching.

1. As Preaching *is by way of more dilated discourse upon particular Subjects*, that is, λόγος κεχυμένος, (to use the expression of that Ancient Catechist of *Alexandria*, this is σύντομος παιδεία.

2. As *Preaching* respects τελειοὺς, those who are more grown, Catechizing νεοφύτους, those who are yet *Babes* in Religion.

3. As *Preaching is as well to stirre up the affections, as to informe the judgment.* This only respects the information of the judgement, and that chiefly in the very principles of Religon, to which Preaching is not limited.

4. As *Preaching is the continued discourse of the Preach-*

er: this requires a vocall account from the hearer.

§. 2. Now concerning this exercise of Religion, It is questioned, *Whether it be a Gospell institution, yea or no?* If we take *Catechizing in this strict notion, for the instilling of the Principles of Religion by word of mouth, into the minds of those who hear us, and that by way of Question and Answer*, it may possibly be hard to prove it, a Gospell institution, either by direct precept or practice from Christ and his Apostles; but that, It was the will of God, even from the Creation of the world, that people should be instructed in the Principles of Religion, appears from the example of God himself, who read the first lecture of this nature to fallen man, *Gen.* 3. And the very name of *Enoch* imports as much. Some of the Hebrew *Rabbins* thinke, that *Abrahams trained servants*, mentioned *Gen.* 14. 14. were such as were *trained* up in Religion: Certaine it is, that *Abraham instructed his Family*, Gen. 14. 14. And that God commanded that his Laws should be whetted by us upon our Children, *Exod.* 13. 8, 14. *Deut.* 6. 7. Hence the *Jews* had a Book, which they called their *Book of Catechisme*: and *Josephus* tells us, they were exceedingly and above all things carefull, that their Children should learne the Law. It was an usuall saying amongst them, *That the world would soon return again into its Chaos, if it were not upheld by the spirits, and breathings of little ones, and such good persons as learned the Law.* Hence they cursed every Towne which had ten (or as others 120.) *Israelitish* Families; if there were not amongst them an *instructer of little ones*. To which custome it is very probable that the Apostle *St Paul* alludeth in that phrase, *Rom.* 2. 20. However by that phrase in the 18. Verse of that Chapter, he plainly confirms such an usage in the Jewish Church: We find under the Gospell our Saviour Christ at twelve years of age, *hearing the Doctors, and asking them Questions*. And severall times after condescending to Answer Questions in Religion propounded to him. And we thinke it not improbable, that the *forme of sound words mentioned*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. and that

Hunc adhuc puerum initiatum fuisse affirmatur in libro Zohar. Jacob. Alting.

Jos. Antiqu. l. 4. cap. 8.

Διδάσκαλος νηπίων.

Κατηχούμενον ἐκ τοῦ νόμου. Luke 2. 46.

Exod. 12. 26.

that *forme of Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. may imply some such method of teaching the Principles of Religion; used in the very beginning of the Gospell. But we conceive there needs no such industry to prove the divine institution, for that *a teaching of Christians the things which Christ hath revealed and commanded, is a Gospell institution*, none will deny. That Children ought to be taught, appears, not only from the will of God revealed to the people of the Jews, the examples of *Abraham* instructing his Family (for which God admitted him of his Privy Counsell in the business of the destruction of the five Cities,) and of *David* instructing *Solomon*, Prov. 4. 4. but also under the Gospell, Parents are enjoyned to educate their Children, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. *Timothy* from a Child was instructed in the Scriptures by his Mother, and Grandmother: And the Apostle plainly speaks *of milk*, and teaching the first Principles of Religion.

Psal. 78. 6. 2 King. 12. 2. Gen. 18. 19. Prov. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 13. Heb. 5, 6. 1.

And thus much being granted, that the ministeriall work lieth as much in Doctrine, as Application; as much in informing the judgment in the Principles of Religion, as in stirring up the affections, and inciting to practice; and that *Children* and *Babes* in Religion, as well as years, are to be thus instructed; we thinke it will easily be evinced, that *Catechizing* (even in the strictest sense) fals under the generall precept of *teaching*, as a *species* of it, and the most accommodate way of teaching such as are first to learn the Principles of Religion, and not obscurely hinted in that ancient precept, *Deut.* 6. 7, 8. especially considering we find our Saviour setting us an example, *Luke* 2. 46. and to his Disciples, *Mat.* 16. 14, 15. to say nothing of *Philip's* dealing with the *Eunuch* in this method, *Acts* 8. and the Apostolicall generall precept, (however it might be calculated for a peculiar Meridian) that Christians should *be ready to give account of their hope to every one that asks them*.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

Besides that, it is yet disputable, Whether the office of *Doctors* or *Teachers* in the Church, mentioned *Eph.* 4. and else-

elsewhere, might not relate to this kind of exercise; or at least whether the exercise be not there asserted, as a distinct Act of the Pastors office?

§. 3. Nor doth the early usage of this method of teaching the Principles of Religion, in the Church of Christ a little confirme us in the opinion of its *Divine Institution*. A Learned Prelate saith, the Evangelist S. *Mark* was the first Catechist at *Alexandria*: Sure we are the orders of *Catethistæ*, and *Catechumeni*, were very ancient in the Church. *Eusebius* tels us, *Pantænus* bare the office of Catechist at *Alexandria*, and tels us, this was of ancient usage. *Origen* succeeded him in the same Schoole and Office. We have the κατεχήσεις, of *Cyrill* of *Jerusalem*, and *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, his παιδάτωγος. The ancient usage of Catechizing Converts before Baptism, is testified by so many Authors, that it can (modestly) be denied by none. *Johannes Stephanus Durantus* tels us, it began to cease when Children were universally Baptized; *Pareus* (in his Edition of *Ursine's* Catechisme,) tels us, that *Confirmation* succeeded instead of it. Bp. *Andrews* tels us, that *Hegesippus* saith, that by meanes of this exercise, the most part of the world had within forty years after Christ, received the Tincture of Christian Religion; And *Julian* the *Apostate* never shewed his spight more to the Christian Religion, then in his destroying of these Schooles. *Canisius* boasts of *Augustine*, *Basil*, *Ambrose*, and *Cyrill*, as his predecessors in this work, and he therein speaks no more then truth (saith Doctor *Donne*.) It is apparent also from the records we have of the practice of the Primitive Churches practice, that they had two sorts of *Catechumeni*. The first, such as were born of Christian Parents, who being Baptized, and of years capable of such instruction, were entrusted to the care of some, who was to instruct them in the Principles, and exhort them, to the practice of Christian Religion: to which purpose we find a passage in *Dionys. Areop.* (an ancient Author doubtless, though not so ancient as to be *Pauls* contemporary.) Τοῦτο τοῖς θείοις ἡμῶν καθηγεμόσιν εἰς

Ἐξ ἀρχαιου ἔθους. *Euseb.* Hist. *l.* 4. *c.* 9.

Durantus de rit. Eccles.

Parei edit. Ursini Cat.

Andr. on the Commandments in Proleg.

Canisius in Catech.

Dionys. Areop. *De Eccles. Hierarch.* cap. 7.

νῦν

τῶν ἐλπιζόντων ἔδοξεν εἰσάγεσθαι τὸ βάπτισμα κατὰ τινὰ τῶν ἱερῶν τρόπον· ὥστε τοὺς φωτιζομένους πρώτους χρὴ παραδίδοναι τὸν πάσας τινὰς τῶν μαθημάτων διδασκάλῳ τὰ θεῖα παιδευσόμενον, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν χρόνον πολεῖν, &c. The other ſort of perſons Catechized, were ſuch as were converted from *Paganiſm*, unto the Faith of Chriſt; and theſe again *Rabanus Maurus* divided into two ſorts; The firſt ſuch as heard Sermons, and had ſome deſire to turne Chriſtians, but had not yet offered themſelves to Baptiſm, theſe they called *Audientes*. The ſecond, ſuch as *deſired Baptiſm*; theſe were called *Competentes*. For whoſe Baptiſm two ſolemn times of the year, *Eaſter* and *Whitſontide*, (called *Pentecoſt*,) were appointed. Which times approaching, thoſe converts who deſired *Baptiſm*, were for the ſpace of forty daies called *Competentes*. *Auguſtine* hath left us one Book directed to the *Catechumeni*, and another *De Catechizandis rudibus*; and *Cyprian* makes mention of *Optatus*, under the notion of Doctor *Audientium*. And as we find it of early uſage in the Church of Chriſt; ſo neither was it quite forgotten in the darkeſt times of Popery, as appeares by the Maſter of the Sentences: *l.* 4. *diſt.* 6. But no ſooner was the work of reformation began by *Luther* in *Germany*, and *Calvin* in *France*, but their firſt thoughts were to revive this exercile: witneſs *Luthers* Catechiſm, which he delighted in above all his works: And *Calvin's* Catechiſm, afterwards by *Tremellius* tranſlated into the three learned Languages. Moſt commendable was the reſolution and practice of the Magiſtracy of *Geneva* in thoſe daies, witneſſed by their Decree mentioned by *Beza* in the life of *Calvin* to this purpoſe.

Rabanus, *l.* 1. *De inſtitut. Clerici.*

Aug. *l. De cura pro mortuis*, c. 12. *de fide & operibus*, c. 6. Cyp. l. 3. Ep. 22. *Ego inquit Theologus ſum, qui mediocrem uſum, & peritiam ſacræ Scripturæ a variis periculis ſum conſecutus; ſed non ita efferor hoc dono; quin quotidie unà cum pueris Catechiſmum Decalogum*, &c. Luther *t.* 4. *p.* 57. *in Pſa.* 126.

It is decreed, that not only the Miniſters inſtruct their people by their publick Sermons; which many neglect to hear, others heare to little purpoſe; but alſo that at a certain time of the year, a civill Officer, together with one of the Elders ſhall go from Family to Family, and houſe to houſe, and require of every one an account of their faith. The profit which followed upon which practice (ſaith *Beza*) is hardly to be credited.

And no ſooner was that famous *Synod of Dort* convened, but having perfected their debates concerning the Tranſlation of the Bible, they fall upon debates for the reviving of this exerciſe: what they decreed about it, may be read in the acts of their *ſeaventeenth Seſſion*; where we obſerve, that they conceive it the duty of *Parents*, *Shoolmaſters*, *Paſtors*, and *Elders of Churches*; and judge it reaſonable that the *Civill Magiſtrate* ſhould be deſired to interpoſe his civill authority, for the promoving the practice of it.

Acta Synodi Dordracenæ, fol. p. 4. 6.

Nor was it only the care of forreign Churches, in the beginnings of their ſeverall reformations, but of ours alſo at home, witneſs that famous Catechiſm of *Edward the ſixth*, in the very dawning of reformation, and the ſeverall Catechiſmes publiſhed by particular perſons ſince, (it is too tedious to rehearſe them all.) And the act of our whole Church enjoyning this practice by her Canons. To which we may adde the *greater* and *leſſer Catechiſmes*, adviſed by our late *Reverend Aſſembly*, and publiſhed by *Authority of Parliament*, agreed to alſo by the *Church of God in* Scotland, *as a piece of the uniformity deſired in the three united Nations.*

§. 4. Having therefore ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, we cannot but *look upon it as an inſtitution of God*, being a neceſſary and moſt accommodate way of teaching. And as we conceive it exceeding uſefull in any ſtate of the Church (conſidering that when we ſhall know moſt, *we ſhall but know in part*,) ſo we conceive it more eſpecially neceſſary, and highly expedient, conſidering the preſent ſtate of the Church amongſt us in *England*. Judicious Mr. *Calvin* ſtuck not to ſay; that it could no where be omitted without a publick *reproach* and *ſcandall*. And in an Epiſtle to the *Protector of England*, is ſo free as to bid him, be aſſured the Church could not want this kind of exerciſe. Indeed it hath a very great influence both upon the *preſervation* and *propagation of Religion in any place.*

Inſtitut, l. 4. c. 19.

1. *Catechiſmes* being breviaries of thoſe truths, which lye

lye at large, disperſed in the Scriptures, ſerve as a touch-ſtone at hand to diſcover erroneous opinions; as the ballance of the Sanctuary, whereby the light notions of men are diſcovered from the weighty truths of Chriſt. In all Sciences it hath been found advantageous, and neceſſary to have *Syſtemes* and *Epitomes*. The Phyſician hath his *Aphoriſmes*, the *Mathematician* his *Elements*, and what thoſe are to them, the ſame are *Catechiſmes* in matter of Divinity. The neceſſity which the Church ſaw betimes of ſuch abſtracts of the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion, produced the ſeverall famous Creeds, as Touchſtones, to diſcern truth from the errors in thoſe times ſpringing up: and the notice, which the *Popiſh* Doctors took of the efficacy of Catechiſm for this end, was it, which made the Church of *Rome* fall upon this courſe; and *Caniſius* for them all, to beſtow his pains this way, and then to glory in it.

2. As the purity of Doctrine is hereby preſerved, ſo the ſuperſtructure upon this foundation, which is holineſs in converſation is much advanced by it. It is an old and certain ſaying of *Auguſtine*, *A good faith and life are inſeparable*: thoſe who firſt make *ſhipwrack of faith*, will not long keep a *good Conſcience*. *Without knowledge* (ſaith *Solomon*) *the ſoul is not good*. Catechizing in the Judgment of *Auguſtine* teacheth Chriſtians not only *what to believe, but what to do*. It makes them eagle-eyed, and fit to diſcern the Lords Body in the Sacrament of his Supper; it inſtructeth every one in his place and teacheth him how to performe his generall and Relative duties. A well learned *Enoch* will *walk with God*. A well inſtructed *Jacob* will be faithfull to an unfaithfull *Laban*. The feare of God is ordinarily taught by the knowledg of him; and though ſometimes God begins with the Affections, and makes his way by them to the head, yet as this cannot be done without ſome degree of Catechiſticall knowledg, ſo we believe upon experience it will be as ordinarily found, that God makes his way to the heart by the head, reflecting notions of truth

Male vivitur ubi non recte creditur, Aug.

Aug. *de cura pro mortuis*, c. 12.

(learned in youth) upon the ſouls of perſons, when they come to ripe years, and ſanctifying their knowledg to their converſion and eternall ſalvation.

3. If it be worth any thing to *preſerve Chriſtians ſtable in the faith*, without which they are but like *reeds ſhaken with every wind*, the confeſſed uſefullneſs of Catechizing to this end will abundantly teſtifie the neceſſity of reviving of it.

In a Sermon Preached at *Pauls* Croſs, *Sep.*15. 1622. on *Jud.*20.15.

It was the obſervation of King *James*, That the miſleading of people into Popery and other errours, was occaſioned by their ungroundedneſs in the points of Catechiſm. This made Dr. *Donn* ſo earneſtly preſs the reviving of this exerciſe, and the *Provinciall Aſſembly* of *London*, commend it as the proper Antidote againſt the errors of theſe times. The neglect of it (ſaith Bp. *Hall*) breeds inſtability of judgment, *miſtakes of neceſſary truths*, *faſhionableneſs of profeſſion*, *frothineſs of diſcourſe*, *obnoxiouſneſs to all error*, *and ſeduction*. The ſoul that hath a ſmattering of ſome knowledg without orderly Principles, is like a tree without roots, ſoon overturned, eſpecially in a wind. And it is no wonder, if there have been and ſtill are many ſuch like reeds overborne with every guſt of wind; and whoſe ſouls are at the beck of every new upſtart Fable or fancy: the walls muſt needs be tottering, where the foundation is not laid deep enough. How can they chuſe but be carried away with every *wind of Doctrine*, who want the balaſt of ſound information in ſolid and conſiſtent Principles? Had there been more Catechizing, it is probable there would have been leſs Apoſtatizing in *England*.

2. Nor is this exerciſe of Catechizing leſs uſefull *for the propagation*, then for the preſervation of true Religion. We mentioned before the opinion of *Hegeſippus*, that by this meanes Chriſtian Religion ſo early overſpread the world. Sr. *Edwin Sands* takes notice of it, as a great meanes, whereby the Proteſtant Party enlarged its bounds. And the Prefatory Epiſtle to the *Romane Catechiſm*, confeſſeth the ſame, ſadly complaining, that the Popiſh

Popiſh cauſe ſuffered moſt by thoſe Writings of ours, which we call Catechiſmes. Biſhop *Andrews* takes notice of the ſame ſucceſs, by the ſame meanes, in our firſt Reformers, and further adds, That if ever our adverſaries get advantage of us (which God forbid) it will be by our negligence, and their diligence herein. And how can we expect either the inlargement or continuance of the reformed Religion, but by the ſame experienced waies and meanes whereby it was at firſt revived? Nor is there only a future good, forelaid for poſterity, but a preſent advantage alſo accrewing unto particular Chriſtians, who are hereby rendred more fit for *Hearing, Reading, Prayer, diſcerning the Lords Body in his Supper*, &c. We cannot but look upon this, as one reaſon of our Preaching ſo long to People, with ſo little profit, that (through the omiſſion, or former ſlighty performance of this duty, we do but build up Walls without a foundation, and graff without a ſtock of Principles. *Imitating* (ſaith Bp. *Hall*) *an indiſcreet Schoolmaſter, who too much affecting the thanks of an overweening Parent, marres the Child by raiſing him to an higher forme, before he hath learned his firſt Rules, from whence follows nothing but an empty oſtentation, and late diſappointment.* Yea ſo neceſſary did he (and not he alone) judge this wholeſome ſpoon-meat (which many now adaies think themſelves either too old, or too good, to be fed with) that he could even quarrell with his Sermons, and wiſh that a great part of them had been exchanged for this Preaching conference. For the uſefullneſs of it we need ſay no more, conſidering how much hath been already ſaid by others. By the reviving of this exerciſe, we ſhall in ſome meaſure know the ſtate of our flock. Our Children ſhall be taught to know the Lord: The heavy eares of our people will be made to hear: the knowledge of the Goſpell will be propagated: Our people armed againſt falſe Teachers: and alſo againſt many dangerous temptations, founded in the ignorance of Fundamentall Principles; Chriſtians will be taught to reduce what they

Haec ſi unquam aliàs ſenſit noſtra aetas, quanta damna haereticorum filii: non modo tartareâ ſuâ linguâ, verum multo maximè peſtilentibus ſcriptis, quae Catechiſmorum titulis ornare ſolent, Eccleſiae Chriſti inferant, Preſat. ad Catech. Rom.

read and hear, to their proper heads : and a foundation will be fairly laid in the understanding, for a naturall conscience to build Application upon, and to restraine much sin by; and as it were a Wall builded in the soul, from which the holy spirit in his good time, may reflect saving beames, for the healing the will and affections. The usefullness of it was suffiently experimented by our Forefathers. *Eusebius* gives a Catalogue of seaven or eight, who commenced Martyrs out of *Origen*'s Catechisticall Schoole at *Alexandria*.

§. 3. So much having been said of the usefullness of it at all times, the particular expediency of it in our times is easily evinced. To say that we have the ignorant alwaies with us, and shall have so long, as it is the lot of the best, to know but in part, were enough; but the slighty performance of this duty in former times, and the long omission of it in later times, hath caused a greater degree of ignorance amongst our people, than either suiteth our profession, or the meanes of knowledg indulged to this last age. And the hasty and plentifull growth of the tares of error and most absurd opinions, is a too sad evidence to the world, that we have too long slept, as to the performance of this piece of our duty, and that it is more then time the practice of it should be revived amongst us. To say nothing of the expediencie of it in reference to the prosecution of the intended reformation, so far as it relates to the admission of Communicants to the Table of the Lord; which is much hindred through the ignorance and sinfull modesty of a people not tutored, in this Method of instruction. All these things evince it highly expedient in these thimes, where many sleep under Sermons without knowledg, and the little knowledg of others is overgrown with the weeds of error. —

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Perſons, upon whom the duty of ſubmiſſion to this exerciſe, is incumbent.

IT appearing from what hath been ſaid in the former Chapter, That Catechizing is an accommodate way of inſtructing Perſons in the Principles of Religion, we ſuppoſe it will eaſily be evinced, that the ignorant are the perſons thus to be inſtructed: theſe are eaſily diſtributed into two ſorts; 1. *Such as are Children in yeares.* 2. *Such as are Children in underſtanding.* Though the latter have Mens haires, yet they have but Childrens heads.

1. That Children ought to be Catechized will be granted by all, not willfully blind, or malitiouſly ſtubborne: the fitneſs of their years to receive inſtruction, and their ingagement upon Baptiſm to liſten to it, are arguments ſtrong enough to this cauſe.

Childhood and youth is the time, wherein *Solomon* adviſeth the Children of men ſhould be trained up *in the way wherein they ſhould go.* The lamentable experience that we have of the frowardneſs, and perverſeneſs of age, Men and Women who overſlipped their golden time of youth, chuſing rather to hazard the eternall ruine of their ſouls by covering their ignorance, than to ſubmit to a gentle cure thereof, is a ſufficient evidence that the twigg had need be bended, while it is young. Nor is that the fitteſt time only to receive Principles, but alſo to retaine inſtruction. Old trees tranſplanted ſeldome thrive, nor do Walls builded in Winter uſually ſtand. A new cloath (on the other ſide) hardly looſeth its firſt dye, nor the veſſell the ſavour of that liquor with which it was firſt ſeaſoned. *Timothy* was trained up in the Scriptures, from his infancy, and departed not from them in his age. Prov. 22. 6.

2. We

2. We conceive all Religious Parents, will be ſenſible, that by their engagement for their Children in Baptiſm, they ſtand bound to God on their behalf, to bring them up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* The Jews were to inſtruct their Children in the reaſon of the Paſſover. And there is no doubt, but *Abraham* minded *Iſaac* his Sonne of the *Covenant made in his fleſh.*

Exo.13. 8,14.

2. But we are ſenſible, That our greateſt oppoſition to this practice, will be from ſuch as in years are no Children, but more than Children in underſtanding. Theſe, through a ſinfull loathneſs to diſcover their own ignorance, and pretended modeſty, will and do plead hard for an exemption from this uſefull way of inſtruction. For our parts, as we are ſatisfied concerning their and our own duty, So reſolving (through the grace of God) not to be defective on our part, we ſhall, as becomes thoſe (who have the overſight of ſouls) require of them a performance of theirs, of which we verily believe they are ſufficiently convinced in their own conſciences; but that (without a faile of our duty to God) we may gratifie them as much, as may be, we ſhall (as we have ſaid) be content to deale with them in a more private way, having it not in our deſigne to diſcover their infirmities, but as much as in us lieth, to hide them. To this purpoſe we have reſolved,

1. *To allow ſome time on the week daies, in which they may come to us, or we to them, that we may diſcharge our duty in inſtructing them, and taking account of their proficiency.*

2. *We ſhall be alſo content to gratifie them in point of privacy, as to company, and to conferre with each one apart* (only here we except *all young Women* for we are ſenſible how many ſcandals have been raiſed, and may be raiſed of us by ſuch private examinations: *but yet we ſhall allow ſuch Women, what company themſelves ſhall deſire to have with them.*)

3. *If any through too much pride, ſhall think himſelf above*

Catechizing

Catechizing by way of Question and Answer, we shall be willing to deale with them by *friendly conference.* All that we aime at, is a cognisance of their knowledg in the Principles of Religion, and by what lawfull meanes we attaine it, we are not solicitous, so they have it and we for the discharge of our consciences be satisfied that they perish not for want of knowledg.

4. To take away all prejudice from our people. We have thought fit also further to declare, *That we are sensible of the distance which God hath set between Parents and Childrer, Masters and Servants:* and far be it from us to do any thing which may render Superiours contemptible to such as are under them; we shall therefore carefully avoid, any such kind of Catechizing or conferring with persons that have a preheminency in respect of years, and place, before such as are young, or in any degree of subjection, or inferiority to them.

5. *We are also sensible of differences betwixt the naturall parts of severall persons; and which have arisen or may arise, through a disproportion of education.* We have therefore declared, That we will carefully avoid all rigour and harshness, and in the performance of this duty conforme our selves according to that measure of prudence which God hath given us, to the severall parts and capacities of those with whom we deale, so as to give all due encouragement to the weakest, and not the least discouragement to any; our design being to instruct and edify, not to confound or discredit them.

6. *But yet we have thought fit to limit the age of such to whom we shall at present indulge the liberty of a private conference, or addresses to us for instruction.* For although we judg such a course (however burdensome to us) at present necessary, considering the long omission of this exercise; yet we conceive a publick *Catechizing* farre more advantageous for the good of others, and would gladly lay in for posterity, a better foundation to build upon, in the Reformation of the Church, then we our selves have met with.

7. And laſtly, *As to the place, (for ſuch perſons, as will not be perſwaded to come into the open Congregation upon the Lords Day) to meet us, we are not overmuch ſollicitous.* Whether it be in the Church, or ſome of our houſes, or at their own dwellings, we ſhall leave this to the prudence of each particular Miniſter, and gratifie the weakneſs of our People in that circumſtance, as they ſhall with any colourable reaſon deſire at our hands.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the forme to be uſed in Catechizing, and why we have made choice of that in the leſſer Catechiſme, adviſed by the late Reverend Aſſembly, &c.

WE are not ignorant, how much ſome in the world (through weakneſs) are prejudiced againſt *formes* in matters of Religion. The Apoſtle hints the poſſibility of mens being poſſeſſed *with a forme of Godlineſs, and denying the power thereof.* Yet doubtleſs a *forme of Godlineſs* in any is more commendable, then a courſe of prophaneneſs. All know how much this part of the world in theſe late years hath been engaged againſt *formes of Prayer.* Though we hope judicious Chriſtians will diſtinguiſh betwixt the *lawfullneſs of a forme*, and the lawfullneſs of *this or that forme*: and again, betwixt the lawfullneſs of *uſing a forme*, and the lawfullneſs of *obliging Miniſters and People* conſtantly to the uſe of one and the ſame forme. The Apoſtle (who ſpeaks ſlightly of a forme of godlineſs) yet ſpeaketh honourably of a *forme of ſound Doctrine.* 2 Tim. 1. 13. And however ſome ignorant people may be offended at the ſound of the word, yet we hope judicious Chriſtians will judg, That as there were not much to be ſaid againſt the conſtant uſage of the ſame formes of Prayer, if they *were alwaies to pray for the ſame* 2 Tim. 2. 2.

things;

things, without adding and detracting, (for surely God is not pleased with varying of phrases expressive of the same thing.) So the same right reason will informe them, that the Doctrine of the Gospell being sealed, (so that neither *an Apostle nor Angell from Heaven* may adde any thing to it,) a *forme of sound words, may be kept* to express that, we have therefore declared our judgement.

1. *To make use of a forme*, the lawfullness of it being evident, the expediency of it constraines us to this. For besides the disproportion of Ministers gifts and abilities, the capacity of our people doth require this at our hands, how shall they know what to answer? must we after every question expect a satisfaction by *Enthusiasme*? *Nor let any tell us, this is but to learne Children by rote, and to nurse up a forme of Godlineß; that the teaching of the Spirit is the Gospell teaching*, &c. We would faine learne of these our weaker Brethren, what it is that Children learne at first otherwise then by rote? do they not learne to speake by rote? *&c.* Or why our Brethren suffer their Children to learne to write by Copies, (which are formes in that art) besides that some Children may be found so apprehensive, as to conceive the thing expressed by the forme of words. However this Argument lyeth as much against *Timothies* being instructed from his infancy, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. as against what we are driving at. And supposing that without the concurrence of the sanctifying Spirit, the issue of this teaching, will be but a notionall knowledg in the head, and a forme of godlineß in the life. May not as much be said against Preaching as against this? nor do we intend, either to anticipate, or justle out the teaching of the Spirit; we hope judicious Christians know how to distinguish betwixt *ministeriall* and *effectuall teaching*. Our designe is no higher by this exercise, then to *prepare the way of the Lord* in the soules of his People. But these Objections are too vaine to be insisted upon: Having agreed the lawfullneß, and expediency, it not the necessity of using a forme,

we come in the next place to agree the particular forme. Where

2. We declare our resolution, *to make use of that forme which is found in the lesser Catechisme, advised by the late Reverend Assembly.* We are aware, that this Agreement of ours may be liable to the exceptions of some, and more especially three sorts of persons.

1. Such who can allow nothing good, but what was established by (what they call) the Church of *England.* These will possibly quarrell at our laying aside the forme prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. We are very far from condemning those *Reverend Persons*, that had an hand in composing either of the *Lyturgy* in generall, or that *forme of Catechizing* in particular: but verily believe they walked up to their light, and did worthily in their generation. But surely, God expects higher improvements from us, and we thinke any (reasonable learned) Divines upon perusall of that forme will find some Questions inserted, not so proper for a Catechism, and severall *Fundamentall Principles* of Religion, very obscurely hinted, if at all touched: Which together with the injunction of the Civil Power upon us to disuse that Book, is sufficient warrant for us without condemning our *Reverend Fathers*, to lay aside thoughts of using that.

2. A second sort are such, who for want of this form, when they entred upon their charges, *have for a long time inured their people to another forme, either composed by themselves, or some other Reverend Men*: Or else who out of a desire to conceale some opinions of their own in matters of Doctrine, chuse rather to make Catechismes of their own, then by the use of this to discover their opinions to the world, by entring a dissent unto the things contained here. For these latter we have nothing to say it being very usuall for men to usher in καινοδοξιάν, by, ἀ καινοτάτα, to avoid which (as we shall more fully express by and by) we have pitched upon this forme. For the former, As we desire to reverence those of our

Brethren,

Brethren, who indeaved to supply the defect of former times, by using their people to Catechismes, more full then that which then had the signature of publick authority, and judge it but just they should reape the fruit of their own labours. So we hope, that ere this time they may have brought up their people to such a proficiency, in that forme, that they may pass on to this, and keep Uniformity with us, which we perswade our selves they will do more easie; because in matter they will find no difference. We have nothing to say to such as out of deligne, or singularity, set up another method, judging that those lusts ought to be mortified and not humoured, and indulged. And for the opinion of some, that this forme is too large; Experience hath taught some of us the vanity of it, it being no more then Children of seaven yeares of age, have with much facility, in a short time got through.

3. But there is a third sort, who have nothing to say against it, but that it was *agreed by that Reverend Assembly*, and they are over jealous for us, as if we would *jurare in verba Magistri*. To convince therefore our Brethren, that we have more to say for the adhering to this then any other forme extant, we shall shortly satisfie our Brethren with our Reasons, why we have pitched upon it.

There are five things which we judg reasonable for us to attend, in making choice of a forme of Catechism, 1. *Fulnesse of matter.* 2. *Purity of Doctrine.* 3. *Brevity of Answers.* 4. *Plainnesse of phrase.* 5. *Orderlinesse.* To which we may adde two others, which yet may be comprehended under the latter. 1. *Uniformity*, and 2. *Publick Authority.*

And we hope every reasonable Christian will judge with us, that in the choice of a forme to be used in Catechizing, if we can find any forme, that hath in it a full Systeme of the Doctrine of the Gospell, and that in its native purity, expressed plainly, and comprized in answers suited (for their brevity) to the capacity of the meanest,

and this forme hath also the countenance of Publick Authority, and be generally approved and used by other Churches of the same perswasion with us in the things of God: this in all reason ought to be pitched upon by us, and preferred before any other forme, and may give a just supersedeas, to any needless indeavours of particular persons, in compiling any other Catechismes for their particular Congregations, especially considering how suspicious such actions may be, and of what ill consequence in opening the like doore of liberty to others, who possibly may have less ability, or further designes, and may too much affect a foolish singularity. Every understanding Christian will discerne, the reasonableness of these properties and adjuncts in reference to the choice of a particular forme.

1. *Fullness of matter.* The designe of Catechizing being the instruction of people in all the Fundamentall Points of the Gospell, in reason we should chuse such a forme as is a full Systeme of Doctrine.

2. *Purity of Doctrine.* Where the Doctrine of the Gospell is not dasht with erroneus Principles, but the milke is (as the Apostle calls it) ἄδολον γάλα, sincere without mixture. That forme of Catechism is doubtless best, which is not, *as many corrupting the word of God, but as of sincerity, as of God, as in the sight of God speaking in Christ*, (as the Apostle speaketh of himself and his Preaching, 2 *Cor.* 2. 17.) One great end of Catechizing is the preservation of the purity of Doctrine. The Devill himselfe grants his vote approbatory of Catechizing by a forme, as the probablest course to propagate errors, and Doctrines of Devils, (witness the *Racovean Catechism*) and those of the Romish Doctors, ---*Habet & vespa suos favos.*

3. *Brevity of Answers.* For it is a way of instruction, fitted to every capacity, and the weakest memories, are to be considered in the exercise of it.

4. *Plain-*

4. *Plainnes or perspicuity.* Catechisticall Doctrine is called the Foundation by the Apostle, *Heb.* 6. 1. Men use not to bestow carving worke upon foundation stones. Truth needs no flourishes to adorne her, she looks best in her native habit.

5. And lastly, *Orderlines*, is a thing not to be neglected. By which we chiefly understand here, an orderly Connexion of the Fundamentall Principles of Religion. This doth not only make the whole more beautifull, but tends much both to the helping of the memory, and the understanding also.

These things being chiefly desirable in the choice of a forme, and all of them (if we mistake not) evident to every judicious Christian in this particular forme, which we have pitched upon, we have from other two considerations been over-ruled to this choice.

1. *From the consideration of the generall approbation which this forme hath received in the Churches of Christ.* It being that to the Doctrine of which the Churches of God in *New England* have subscribed, and the whole forme agreed upon, by Brethren of different perswasions, (amongst our selves) in matters of *Church-Government*. It being also received by the Church of God in *Scotland*, and agreed to be used as part of the intended, and desired *Uniformity* betwixt the two Nations, and that in which our Brethren of the *Province of London*, and in other *Associations in severall Counties* have agreed; And we are aware of how much consequence it is, especially as to matters of Doctrine, in the things of Religion, that Christians should learne to speak τὸ αὐτὸ the same thing: That passage of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. doth in this thing lay a Law upon us.

Now I beseech you Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speake the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you.

2. Nor lastly, Do we think the *authority inconsiderable, with which that forme is more clothed then any other.* If we should not allow that *Reverend Assembly*, which

which composed that forme to have had all the formalities of an Ecclesiasticall Synod, and consequently deny the obligation of their Acts, yet it must be confessed, 1. That they were *convened* and directed to this work, by Authority of *Parliament*. 2. That *this was a worke proper to them*. 3. *That there were many of them*, and those *holy and Learned Men*, Pastors of severall Churches, mighty in the Scriptures, furnished *with* all internall qualifications, for the work to which the providence of God called them. 4. That in the composing of it, it was set up like a Butt, against which any of that Assembly (in which were also persons of differing perswasions) might shoot their Arrowes: and every parcell of it deliberately perused. That being thus composed, it was openly read in the Parliament, by that Parliament Ordered to be Published, and all due care taken, that it might be faithfully communicated to the Nation from the Press.

We must profess, when we consider the matter, the forme, the Composers, the care taken in the Composure, and Publication, the intendment of the Assembly in Composing, and of the Parliament in the Publication, we cannot but admire, the designs of any, who since the Publication of that, hath needlessly laboured to Publish any other Catechisme of his own, at least with any designe to use it in the publick Congregations, and for our own parts, if we could allow our selves such an humour, we should feare it would signifie to the world that we had some designs under some covert expressions, to innovate in matter of Doctrine, or that we too much fancied our own methods, and singularities, or at least that we were not so well wishers to Uniformity, in matters of practice in the things of God, as we desire we may be found in our generations. And thus much we hope may satisfie our Brethren for our resolutions concerning the choice of this particular forme.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Giving an account of the two last Articles of our Agreement concerning Catechizing.

THe two last Branches respect our Agreement in judgment concerning the persons upon whom this duty is incumbent, and our Agreement as to point of practice, in order to the enforcing of it where there shall appear to us a wilfull neglect of it.

As to the first, We humbly conceive it a duty incumbent, upon all those who have the charge of others, though in a different degree and manner.

1. Upon *Magistrates*, *Qua Magistrates*, to command the performance of it; and to take care that those under their charge discharge their duty in it; we find an honourable mention in Scripture, of those godly Princes, that commanded the performance of those things, from their Priests, and Levites, and people, which God had given them in charge to do. *Josiah* commanded *Hilkiah* and *Ahikam*, and *Achbor*, and *Shaphan*, and *Asahiah* to go and enquire of the Lord for him: and again he commandeth the *people to keep the Passover*. *Asa* commanded his people to *seek the Lord, and to do the Law, and Commandment*. *Hezekiah* commands the Priest to offer Sacrifice and the *Levites* to sing. *Manasseth* when he was turned to God *commanded the people to seek the Lord God of Israel*. And we cannot think that the *Schooles of the Prophets* (of which we read so often in the Old Testament) were erected otherwise then by *publick Authority*. We are sure if the Magistrate be entrusted with the custody of both Tables, this will follow. We will easily grant that the Magistrate hath nothing to do, to command that in the worship of God which God hath not first commanded: But that it is not his concernment (by the interposition of his civill authority) to inforce the observation of

2 King. 22. 12. 2 Chro. 14. 4. 2 Chron. 29. 21, 24, 27.

what God hath commanded, is a piece of new Divinity to us, and we conceive calculated only for the *Meridian* of ſome *Atheiſticall Principles*. We are ſure thoſe who neglect theſe duties are *evill doers*, and to ſuch the Apoſtle tells us the *Magiſtrate* ought to be a *terror*. We conclude therefore with the ſuffrage of that never enough renowned Synod of *Dort*. ---*Ut omnes diligenter officium faciant rogandierunt Magiſtratus Chriſtiani, ut tam ſanctum & neceſſarium opus authoritate ſuâ promoveant*. And we bleſs God that we are not out of hopes of ſeeing our deſires in this thing. We ſhall beg of God, that as he hath in the ſupreame Councell of the Land, given ſtrength to conceive and to bring to the birth, ſomething of this nature, ſo that in his own time he would give alſo ſtrength to bring it forth: But we ſhall proceed to ſuch, whom the work more immediately concerns: Thoſe are ſuch as have the charge of others under their more immediate inſpection. 1. *All Miniſters of the Goſpell, and Elders of Churches.* 2. *Such as are entruſted with the education of youth in Schooles.* 3. *Such as have an Oeconomicall charge, either as Parents or Maſters.*

Acta Syn. Dord. ſeſs 17.

1. For ſuch as are *Elders of Churches*, we conceive the caſe is plaine enough, not to diſpute whether Paſtor and Teacher be two diſtinct offices, or exhorting, and teaching two diſtinct acts of the ſame office. We conceive it the duty of all ſuch as have a paſtorall charge, under a larger or ſtricter notion, this being common to both to *feed the people* with wiſdome and underſtanding, we know none will diſpute this with us. As for ſuch Churches where are Ruling Elders, we cannot wholly exempt them from this concernment. *The ſecluding of the ignorant from the Lords Supper*, being an act of *Juriſdiction*, in which all that rule in the Church, in reaſon muſt be concerned, and we cannot judg it reaſonable, that they ſhould be blindfolded in judgment. Beſides that we find this the expreſs ſenſe of the *Synod of Dort*, in the place before mentioned, and the Decree of the Magiſtrates of *Geneva*, (beforementioned) includeth them.

2. For ſuch as are intruſted with the *education of youth*

in

in Schooles, We conceive we have no obscure hints in Scripture, The *Jewish Schooles* being principally for instructing youth in their Law, and we conceive we have made an ill exchange under the Gospell, if the design of our Schooles should be meerly to acquaint youth with the stile, and matter of Heathenish Authors, while in the mean time there is no regard of the knowledge of God. Nor can we conceive it ought to be neglected in *petty Schooles*, for wherefore do Children learne to read the Scriptures, but in order to the comprehending of the Doctrine contained in them? for which we conceive Catechizing the most proper and accommodate meanes: This hath made us resolve to press this duty upon all *Schoole-masters*, and *Schoole-dames* in our Parishes, and we hope we shall in it approve our selves to the consciences of all such, as desire to know and feare the Lord.

Ut juventus Christiana à tenera ætate, in fundamentis veræ Religionis, instituatur, &c. Triplex Catechizandi ratio, observare debet domestica à Parentibus, Scholastica, à ludimagistris & Ecclesiastica à Pastoribus, senioribus, & Lectoribus, &c. Acta Synodi Dordrac. sess. 17ª.

3. The third sort are such as are *Parents* and *Masters*, their duty lies in reference to their Children and Servants. We have spoken so much before to prove this their duty from the example of *Abraham*, *David*, *Timothies mother*, *and grandmother*, the command of God, *Deut.* 6. 7. and *Exod.* 12. that we need not repeate any thing, how Parents (without instructing their Children in the Principles of Religion, should according to the Apostles command bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, we cannot tell. Nor what account Masters shall in the great day of the Lord, be able to give concerning their Servants for whose souls they shall certainly have some account to make. It is an honourable record, the holy Ghost hath left of *Cornelius*, Acts 10. 2. that he was a *devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much almes to the people, and prayed alway.* We judg it a good old Principle, that the Master of a Family, is there a *Prophet*, *Priest*, and a *King*? A Prophet to instruct his Family, by Reading and Catechizing, a Priest to pray for them, and a Prince to rule them, and to see to the execution of the will of God, by those within his doors, and expelling such as will not: in this they have *David's*

preſidens, *Pſalm* 101. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.

As to the laſt thing mentioned in our Agreement, becauſe it may poſſibly give ſome cauſe of ſtumbling, we ſhall adde a few words to convince our Brethren of the reaſonableneſs of it.

The Magiſtrate not pleaſing yet to interpoſe his Civill Authority, enjoyning Parents and Shoole-maſters, *&c.* to do their duty. We have been at the greateſt loſs to conſider, how thoſe who are engaged to this duty, and whom no private or more publick admonition will quicken to the performance of their duty; may be engaged to the performance, or deterred from the neglect of their ſeverall duties in this thing: Corporall and pecuniary mulcts, being neither lawfull for us to impoſe, nor yet proper to the ſphere wherein God hath ſet us. We find the Divines of *Haſſia*, and *Helvetia*, and *Breme*, together with Reverend *Diodate*, and *Tronchinus*, thus giving in their ſenſe in their Papers preſented to the Synod of *Dort* concerning this Subject. *'Ad Cœnæ Dominicæ uſum, præſertim in pagis nemo admittatur niſi qui Doctrinam Catechiſticam probe teneat, & fidei ſuæ rationem, coram totâ eccleſiâ publicè reddat. Sponſi non copulabuntur, niſi paſtoribus ſuis in Religione Chriſtianâ profectus, ſatis comprobaverint.*

Acta Syn. Dord. ſeſſ. 152. Jud. Haſſiac.

The *Helvetian* Divines thus,

Ut diſcendi ſtudium accendatur & foveatur, quicunq; Matrimonium ſuum publicè conſecrari volunt, tenentur ſe ſiſtere Paſtori ſuo, ut huic ſuum in cauſa Religionis profectum probent. Eſtq; penes paſtorem, horum vel petitionem admittere, vel ſuſpendere, certumq; præſcribere tempus, &c. ---Nemo etiam ex juvenibus ad Cœnæ communionem admittitur; niſi prius examinatur an myſterium hoc ſanctum probè intelligat. ---Ex junioribus non admittitur teſtis Baptiſmi niſi prius examinetur an myſterium Baptiſmi, & quodnam ſit officium teſtis intelligat.

Helvetiorum Judicium. ibid.

Qui Matrimonium meditantur, eiq; benedici volunt, privatim occaſione, prudenter & amicè captâ (quale apud Auguſt. de Catechizandis rudibus eſt legere) de Religione ſeu cultu, & quaſi aliud agatur, audiri poſſunt. Similiter opportunum

Bremenſium Judic. ibid.

sium erit Christianum cum eo instituere colloquium qui infantem suum tingendum offert, aut qui ad Baptismum testis adhibetur: In primis autem ad Sacram Cœnam, nemo sine justâ fidei, ac vitæ exploratione, ac religiosa stipulatione est admittendus.

Pastores---Omne opē atq; etiam pro authoritate suâ id a juvenioribus pueris, & puellis exposcant & obtineant.

Judicium Johannis Deodati & Theod. Tronchin'. ibid.

The Divines of *Great Brittain*, insist only upon the Magistrates Authority.

Our Question being only concerning the power, which may be exercised by the Officers of the Church untill the Magistrate pleaseth to exercise his power. We have only to consider what the other Divines thought in this case; Their advice is reducible to these heads:

1. That Ministers should deny Marriage to such as should not first give them account of their faith.

2. That they should deny, to admit any as Sureties in Baptism, who should not first do the like.

3. That they should before the Baptizing of the Children of any offered to Baptism, take a Catechisticall account of the Parents, (in case he refuseth they do not advise the withholding Baptism.)

4. That they admit none to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, but such as shall first openly give an account of their proficiency in the knowledg of the Principles of Religion.

For the first of these, *Marriage* being an Ordinance of God, which concerns men, as men, not as Christians, and Members of a Church meerly, and the *Act* being a *Civil Act*, and being not within the Ministeriall commission, which the Gospell Ministers have from Christ, (though an Act to which we conceive they may be commissioned from the Civil Magistrate, and most proper for them to performe by the Application of the generall Acts of their Office exhoting and prayer: they being persons most fit for those works, and Marriage the most weighty action of our lives, and fit to be attended with exhortation and prayer and so sanctified.) We cannot see clearly what power Ministers as Ministers, have upon the solemnization

of Marriage, to engage parties to be Married to a submission to this duty, though we judg it necessary that Christians who are concerned to marry in the Lord, and to carry themselves in their relations, *as becometh the Gospell of Christ*, should be instructed in the Christian faith, and know the relative duties which the Gospel requireth of them.

As to the second, If we could suppose *Sureties in Baptism* in all cases necessary, or expedient, we should judg it reasonable and necessary, that he who admits them under that notion, for the education of a Child, in the true Religion, should be first assured that they should be fit for such an undertaking. But we cannot lay much stress there, because it neither appears to us from Scripture-precept, or president, that such Sureties ought to be admited; nor yet have we any record of any *Compatres*, for many hundreds of years after Christ; *Propatres* indeed were allowed, in case the Parents were unknown, dead, sick, or absent upon necessary occasions: and there is none ignorant how grosly that usuage of the latter Church hath been and is still abused in the Church of *Rome*, and how absurdly it hath been used in our own Church.

3. Concerning *Baptism*, we do cleary agree, that it is a piece of prudence fit to be exercised, when persons come to us to desire Baptism for their Children, to try if we can get an account of their proficiency in the knowledg of Religion, and we shall our selves (as we see occasion) practise it. But in case any Parents be so stubborn, that they refuse to give us an account whether this may be judged by us a sufficient warrant to deny, or withhold the administration of the Ordinance to the Child, is not so cleare to us. Our Reverend Brethren in the Synod of *Dort* say no more, then *opertunum tempus erit*, &c. it would be a fit time to deale with such Parents. It is true, that Baptism belongs to the Child in the right of the Parent, and that the unbelieving Parent hath no such right, but it is as certain that the Child may have a claime in the right of either Parent, and that not the immediate Parent only.

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As to the fourth, We are the more confident, that it is our duty *to withhold the other Sacrament from such refusers*, not only because we find this the Unanimous sense of the Churches of God, met in the *Synod of Dort*, and also of severall Divines in their particular writings, but because the Apostle plainly tells us, that *he who discerneth not the Lords body, eateth and drinketh unworthily, and so becomes guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, and eateth judgment to himself*. And we being *Stewards of the Mysteries of God* (*of whom it is required that they should be faithfull*, 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2.) cannot conceive we should be faithfull in dispensing of that Sacred Mystery, to those concerning whom we have no evidence, that they are able to *examine themselves, or to discerne the Lords Body*. We must therefore look upon such, 1. As *Ignorant*, and upon that account unworthy. 2. As *Scandalous*, obstinately refusing instruction, and upon that account also unworthy of that Communion.

And it being (as before) concluded from *Scripture*, from *reason*, and from the *Judgment of all the Divines in that famous* (aforementioned) *Synod*, and by diverse others in their particular writings, to be the duty of Parents and Masters of Families, and such as have the education of youth in Schooles, to be a piece of their duty also: in not doing of it, they shall fail in their duty, both to God, and to the souls of those committed to their charge, and therefore will deserve the more private *admonition* of the Pastor, and more *publick admonition* of the Church, if that will not do; and being under such admonition, we shall conceive it our duty to withhold the Administration of the *Lords Supper* to them, as persons that are scandalous, untill such time as we have evidence of their submission and reformation: Only we thinke the case of these may admit of exception in the case of such Parents and Governours as cannot read, and some other speciall cases. We have therefore added, [*In case they refuse to instruct them themselves, or else to send them to us to be instructed:*] We hope we speak to persons, that know so well the Autho-

rity,

rity, which God hath give them over their Children, or Servants, that none of them will say to us, *what if we cannot make them come?* surely the *rod of Correction* is not only made, but also put into the hands of Parents and Master too *for the backs of such fooles*: And as none is fit to be trusted, with the government of the bodies of Children or Servants, who if they should be so lazy that they would not worke, could not tell how to bring them to a better mind: So we judg them every way as unfit to be trusted with their souls, who know not how to use their Authority to them, to make them submit to the Instruction of their souls in the things of God.

FINIS.

To all Christian People, Inhabitants in any Parishes, within the County of *Norfolk*, or the City and County of *Norwich*, especially such as are under the charge of any of the Associated Ministers in those Counties.

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

WE *having (through the blessing of God upon our long debates) come to a setled Agreement as to practice, relating to the reviving of an ancient and usefull exercise of Religion amongst you, (the particulars of which* Agreement, *with the reasons moving us to a consent in them, we have before exprest) we have nothing to do, but to beseech you, if there be any regard to be had, either to your own immortall souls, or to the souls of those whom God hath betrusted you with; if any bowels and mercies in you towards them, if you put any value upon the rooting, or establishing of souls in the Principles of Faith, That you would in this thing submit unto us, as unto those* whom God hath set over you, and who must be accountable for

your ſouls *in the day of the Lord Jeſus; that our account concerning you in that day, may be given up* with joy, and not with grief, for that will to us be grievous, (*and we are ſure*) for you unprofitable. *What we deſire from you we have already told you, and it is reducible to theſe two heads;*

1. A juſt account from you *of your proficiency, under the means of grace, ſo long continued to you: that you may fullfill our joy, while we ſhall have ſome aſſurance from you, that we have not laboured amongſt you in vain.*

2. A mutuall aſſiſtance from you, *Inabling us to diſcharge that duty which we confeſs our ſelves to owe to thoſe under your roofs.*

As to the firſt: When you ſhall have duly conſidered, that we are thoſe who watch for your ſouls, *and ſtand charged with them in Gods Book, we truſt that you cannot but judge our motion exceeding reaſonable, conſidering that we cannot perfect our accounts without conferring Notes with you; What a ſad account ſhall we have to give for thoſe ſouls, for whom we ſhall be only able to ſay, Lord!* what they are, or how they have profitted we cannot tell, for they kept their ſouls reſerved from us. *How can you ſay that you own the Miniſtery of the Goſpell, or us as the* Stewards of God, *and yet refuſe that inſtruction which we are ready to give you, or that duty of ſubmiſſion which you owe unto us? With what ſatisfaction can we either Adminiſter the Sacrament of Baptiſm to your Children, or the other Sacrament to your ſelves, whenas you who addreſs your ſelves unto us, to demand the firſt in your right for your Children, or the latter for your ſelves, refuſe to give us any evidence, that you have his warrant (whoſe Stewards we are) to require either the one, or the other, and we*

(*poſſibly*)

(possibly) know not, whither you know any thing, either of the nature of that God, to whose Ordinances you lay claim, or of those mysteries of which you desire to be made partakers? We are sufficiently convinced, that those amongst you in whose hearts we shall find such Principles of frowardness working, are of the number of such as the Apostle calls Children in understanding; *and stand in most need of, what you will see no need at all of; at least we have no reason to judge otherwise concerning you: for the gracious heart is willing to be* searched and tryed: *the knowing souls are alwaies desirous of instruction; and those who are awakened to a stedfast belief, that they must one day give an account to God, will not only be frequently taking account of themselves, but ready also to give an account unto such, as they judge faithfull; not finding it an easie matter to satisfie themselves concerning the state of their own souls, or concerning a just improvement under the meanes of grace. Give us leave therefore to treat you, under the notion of* Babes in Christ, *and to intreate you to consider with us;*

1. The excellenty of the knowledge of the things of God. *All knowledge hath its proportionate goodness, but this a more eminent excellency, both in regard of the* excellency of the Object, *and also the* usefullness of the Act. *It is the homage which the understanding gives to God, and without it, though the Affections may be laden with the fruit of good desires and zeale, &c. yet the understanding will be barren and unfruitfull. That God who hath made the* Affections, *hath (doubtless) made the* Understanding also, *and expects an homage from the latter, as well as the devotion of the former; he hath made them both for himself, and is unwarily served by any single power of the soule. It is dishonour-*

ble for him that pretends to any profeſſion, to a practice in any Mechanick, or intellectuall myſtery, not to know the principles of that Art or Myſtery, to which he profeſſeth; and is it not much more diſhonourable, to him who owns the Reverend name of a Chriſtian, *to be ignorant in the Principles of Chriſtianity? Is light pleaſant to the eye? and all knowledg pleaſant to the underſtanding, becauſe its proper Object? and is there no delight to be found in the ſouls comprehenſion of the things of God? Is that knowledge ſweet, the utmoſt iſſue of which is but ſatisfying an itch of curioſity, fitling us for converſe with Men, or the gaining of an eſtate or intereſt in the world? and is there no ſweetneſs in that knowledge, which prepares us for converſe with Saints and Angels, for a converſe with God in duty, and for the enjoyment of God himſelf to all eternity? The knowing Chriſtian who is zealous alſo, is far better than him, that is, zealous without knowledge; if knowledge and zeale lye in the ſoul together, there will be heat; if zeale runs ſo faſt that it ſtumbles (as it did in* Pauls *caſe, and in the Jews too) knowledge will* lift it up; *if a temptation to errors or Apoſtacy prevaile againſt zeale, if knowledge be with it, thoſe two ſhall withſtand it, and the threefold cord of knowledg, zeal, and ſincerity, in any ſoul will not be eaſily broken.*

2. *Conſider (we beſeech you)* the danger of ignorance in the things of God. *Chriſt will come in flaming fire,* to take vengeance, *as well upon them that* know not God, *as upon them, who* obey not the Goſpell of Chriſt. *The ignorant as well as the diſobedient,* ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. *Beſides how can you* believe on him, of whom you have not heard? *or worſhip that God whom you do*

2 Theſ. 1. 8.

not

not know? or performe that homage of holineſs to him which you do not underſtand? Knowledge is not only it ſelf, a piece of the Tribute which we owe to God, but the foundation, upon which every Altar built to the living God, muſt be erected; an ingredient in every compoſition, from whence he can ſmell a ſweet ſavour. A meer neſcience of things neceſſary to be known, pollutes us, and makes way for our damnation. But

3. *Conſider (Brethren) that an* affected ignorance is much more dangerous. The ſoul that is without knowledg is not good, *Prov.* 19. 2. *But he that* refuſeth inſtruction (*ſaith* Solomon,) deſpiſeth his own ſoul, *he is one who* judgeth himſelf unworthy of eternall life, *making a covenant with darkneſs, and ſubſcribing his own* damnation: *and this (ſaith our Saviour) is* the condemnation. *The poor Pagan gropes for the Wall, becauſe he wants light, this man falls into the pit becauſe he ſhuts his eyes; The former knows not how to get a knowledge of God, further then his inviſible things are* clearly ſeen from the things that are made. Theſe like not to retain God in their knowledg; *they are of the number of thoſe of whom* Job *ſpeaks*, who ſay to the Almighty, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy waies. *The wilfull ſelf-murther is the greateſt murther, and the wilfull ſoul murtherer is (doubtleſs) moſt ſhut out of the hopes of eternall life. Give us leave therefore to beſeech you in the words of* Solomon, *that you would* attend unto wiſdom, and bow your ears unto underſtanding. ---Leſt you mourn at the laſt, *when your ſoul and body* ſhall be conſumed; and ſay, How have we hated inſtruction? and our heart deſpiſed knowledg, and have not obeyed the voice of our Teachers, nor inclined our eares unto thoſe who would have inſtructed us? *Leſt any of you*

ſay; do not we read the Word, and hear Sermons, in order to our inſtruction, what needs Catechizing? We beſeech you

3. To conſider how many years ſome of you have ſate under our publick Preaching, and yet how unskilfull you are to this very day in the word of Righteouſneſs. *What the Apoſtle ſaith to the* Hebrews, *we fear may be applied to you.* When as for the time you ought to have been teachers of others, you have need that one teach you again which be the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God, and are ſuch as have more need of milk then of ſtrong meat, *Heb.* 5. 12. *For the demonſtration of this, you need do no more then Catechize your ſelves, concerning the nature of* Originall Sinne, *the* Juſtification *of the ſoul before God,* &c. *things of higheſt concernment to your immortall ſouls; to ſay nothing of that wofull ignorance which we daily find amongſt you, concerning the Natures and Perſon of Chriſt, and the great myſtery of mans Redemption; and daily experience ſhews us, how much this ignorance expoſeth Pious ſouls to the temptations of Satan, both thoſe which are* to ſin, *and thoſe which are* for ſin, *as alſo to every wind of Doctrine, and the errours of ſuch, who go about to deceive. Nor indeed can we reaſonably expect leſs. The Principles of Religion are in the bottom of our Sermons, but in thoſe exerciſes, the truths of God are but lightly inſiſted upon; now and then one of them paſſeth by the ſoul, and it receiveth a little thereof, but it is attended with many expreſſions, ſerving only to ſtirre up the Affections; for the croud of which, thoſe who are ſmall in ſtature as to knowledg, can hardly diſcerne what the Principle is, which is the Subject of our Diſcourſe, (it is loſt in the retinew) ſo that the fruit of Preaching is ſeen rather in warming the heart, than in the information of*

the judgement; There the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ are one by one, (and that cursorily too) brought to the soul; but in these exercises they make a stay at the door of your hearts, and knock once and again, besides that you see them in their native dress, nor are they dismissed from you, untill you have viewed them in every part and got a full cognisance of them.

4. *And lastly, Let us beseech our dearly beloved Friends to consider,* The vanity of their pleas for a non-submission to this exercise. *We are aware, that some of you will plead your* Priviledges, *others their* temptations, *a third sort,* their naturall infirmities, *Give us leave to reason out the case a little with you.*

Those who think themselves priviledged from this piece of their duty, challenge to themselves such a priviledge, either from their Age, *or* outward quality of the world, *or from their* Married Relation, *or lastly, from their former* Admission to the Supper of the Lord. *But will any of these excuse an affected ignorance, when the day of the Lords vengeance shall come to be executed upon them that* know not God?

1. *For the first it is true,* Daies should speak, and the multitude of years should teach understanding, *and that it is a businesse of more difficulty, for aged, than for younger persons to receive, or retaine Principles of Instruction, experience teacheth; but we are yet to learne, that it is a businesse of less duty for such. It had indeed been well, if in the* morning, they had not neglected to have sown their seed, *but shall their hand be therefore stuck in the evening? shall one neglect excuse another? or is not the difficulty that attends the work in aged persons, a just penance rather, for their neglect in youth? Necessity will teach those to dig in their age, who knew*

not

not in their youth how to do it; and will it do nothing to constraine ignorant persons that are aged, to learn the things of God, that their souls may be saved in the day of Christ? Shall the danger of starving or begging our bread, prevaile further with us, then the danger of burning in Hell for ever? will it excuse you to answer the judge of the quick and the dead, hereafter calling you to an account for your ignorance in daies of light, to say, Lord! we were too old to learne? *It was possible but your misery (through want of good education) not to be instructed when you were young; we are sure it will be a damnable sin unto you, to refuse instruction, because you are old; you are neareſt to eternity, it should be judged your greateſt concernement to be preparing for it, and* John 17. 3. It is life eternall to know God, and whom he hath sent, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *For those who pleade their* Quality, *in bar to this piece of their duty, we trust they will desert their Plea, when they shall have seriously considered, that these accidentall differences betwixt pieces of the same clay, will not hereafter be considered by the great* Potter, with whom there is no respect of persons. *When the grave shall have stripped us of all our gawdry, and our severall honours shall be laid in the dust, and the resurrection shall again present us before the great Tribunall of God; there will be no* Heralds of Armes, *to distinguish us according to our severall dignities, Lords and Ladies, Esquires, Gentlemen, &c. will be all known, but under the common notion of the Sons of Men; At that day* the Kings of the Earth, the great, and the rich Men, the chief Captains and the mighty men; *as well as the poor* Bondmen *and* Apprentices, *or ordinary* Freemen, *and* Yeomens Children, *if they have not* known God, *and* obeyed the Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(which

(which without a previous knowledge of it they cannot do) will be seen, indeavouring to hide themselves in Dens, and it in the Rocks of the Mountains, *and be heard crying to the* Rocks, *and to the* Mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of him *that shall that day* sit upon the Throne, *and from the* wrath of the Lamb, *before which* none shall be able to stand. *Besides it is impossible there should be a greater Argument of ingratitude and disingenuity, than for us to plead the favours of God towards us, in bar or abatement of our duty toward him, from whom it is that we are made thus to differ from our Brethren, and who hath therefore done it, that we might be the more obliged to our homage. How contrarily doth that good Man* Nehemiah *argue in this case,* should such a man as I flye? *saith he, he makes his greatness an engagement to duty: we pleade it in excuse for duty. He argues from it, an engagement upon him, to be an example unto others: We argue, that because of it, we should not be obliged to follow the good example of others. God of old complained of his people* Israel *in this Language:* I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a Land that was not sown; *Israel* was holiness to the Lord: and the first fruits of his increase, *Verse* 5. What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me? and have walked after iniquity, and are become vain? *And again,* I did know theee in the wilderness, in the Land of great droughts. But *Verse* 6. According to their pasture, so were they filled; and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me. *Oh that it might not be said of any towards whom God hath set us in relation; when they were poore, and low in the world, when they went after God in the wilder-*

Jer. 2. 2.

Hos. 13. 4.

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neſs of many ſtreights, and difficulties, then they were holineſs to the Lord, *then they ſeemed to delight to know and to follow on to know the God of their mercies, they and their houſes then ſerved the Lord. Themſelves were not* above Ordinances, *(to uſe the improper phraſe of theſe ſinfull times,) nor their Children, above* Catechizing. *But God hath bleſt them with increaſe upon Trading, or exalted them to ſome places of* profit *or* truſt, *and they are grown great in the world, and now* According to their paſture, ſo they are filled, *and they have forgotten him that lifted them up. This is indeed to become* like the beaſt that periſheth: *while the wanton horſe is out of fleſh, every Child can take him, every Rider rule him; but when he is grown fat, he becomes unruly, and unfit for his Maſters uſe. We read concerning* Saul, *that God once ſaid.* It repenteth me that I have made *Saul* King, 1 *Sam.* 15. 11. For he is turned back from following me. *We are afraid leſt God ſhould ſay concerning many, in this proud and licentious age; It repenteth me that I have advanced ſuch or ſuch perſons in the world, that I have given them plentifull eſtates, titles of honour or dignity; for ſince that time* they have forgotten me.

3. *There is a third ſort,* who think themſelves priviledged by marriage, *The Apoſtle indeed tells us, that* marriage is an honourable eſtate, *and it is a ſhame to any to be under an engagement to the performance of duties, in which he is ignorant; The Wife is commanded to* learn of her Husband at home, *and the Husband to walk with* her as a man of knowledg; *but experience tells us, how few there are to live up that this duty: yea that there are not many in a capacity to performe it. We thinke it reaſonable that perſons in ſuch relation, ſhould be prudently dealt with by their Miniſters, but we cannot*

think

think them excuſed from their duty, in the uſe of, and ſubmiſſion unto all means proper for their inſtruction in things of God, without a knowledge of which, we are ſure they can never have eternall life.

4. For thoſe who have been admitted to the Supper of the Lord in particular Churches; *We confeſs ſomething more may be ſaid. This exerciſe chiefly intending the due information of Chriſtians, in the Fundamentall and more neceſſary Principles of Religion, in which ſuch ſhould be competently inſtructed, who are regularly admitted to that piece of Communion with God. But yet in regard that all ſuch Chriſtians ſtand obliged to a growth in knowledge, as well as any other grace, and we are ſure thoſe who know moſt* know but in part, *and this (as we have formerly argued) is a moſt accommodate meanes in order to ſuch a growth, we are not ſatisfied that this is a ſufficient plea for any, unleſs both they, and their Paſtors find that they have attained, ſome more than ordinary perfection in knowledge, before their admiſſion into that degree of Communion. We look upon Catechizing, as an exerciſe deſigned to an higher end, than the meer preparing of Communicants for the Table of the Lord; and though we preſume that none admitted to that Table, by any conſciencious Miniſter, ſhall need be examined like Children, as to their knowledge in the firſt Rudiments of Religion; yet we truſt, this exerciſe may in a ſhort time be ſo farre improved, that it will not appeare a puerile exerciſe; we intend (God willing) to begin with the* ſhort Catechiſm, *(compoſed by the Aſſembly) and to examine it throughout. Without the Scriptures annexed, then to examine the Scriptures alſo, that it may appeare to our people, that their faith is not to be bottomed in the words of Men, but in the wiſdome of God; and we would hope that in time, we might*

bring ſome of our people beyond that ſhorter forme, to give us ſome account of the larger Catechiſm; we heartily wiſh all thoſe in Sacramentall Communion with us, were thus farre inſtructed: but we find by too frequent experience, that even their knowledge is very diſproportionate, to the meanes of grace which they enjoy; and that few of them have a diſtinct and orderly knowledge of the firſt Principles of Religion, and are much at loſs, to prove by Scripture, what they profeſs to know, and believe. Nor would we willingly reſt here, but would gladly bring up ſome of our people, to give us account of our Sermons, and of ſuch Queſtions, as we ſhall out of the roade of the Catechiſmes, propound for the further explication of the Anſwers found there. Now if we can ever ripen this exerciſe to ſuch a perfection, every one will judge that here will be ſomething more done, than can be expected from Children; And we conceive that if any ſuch who are in fulleſt Communion with us, ſhall think fit to Anſwer us ſome Queſtions, in the face of the Congregation, beſides the advantage may redound to others, who may thereby be encouraged to their duty, there may no ſmall advantage accrew by it to their own ſouls, whilſt by this meanes, their knowledge will be perfected, and their judgements ſetled concerning the things of God, and they will be enabled to give a reaſon of their hope, to every one that ſhall aske it of them.

2. *There is a ſecond ſort, who have nothing to plead* but the force of a temptation, from the ſcorne and reproaches of their Neighbours, or poſſibly thoſe that live in the ſame Family with them. *Who ſo remembers* Abraham's *Family, was not free from an* Iſhmael, *and that a* Michal *was found in the boſome of him, who was* the man according to Gods own heart, *cannot reaſonably expect, that the large* family of God, *(which*

is his Church) ſhould be without ſome profane Scoffers at thoſe who are better than themſelves. Nor is this a ſmall diſcouragement to thoſe, who are not ſo well exerciſed in the things of God, as to have taſted the comfortable advantages, which are the returnes and rewards of duty in this life. The Phariſees ſcandall, (John 7. 49. Have any of the Rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him, but this people which knoweth not the Law, and are curſed?) *thrown in the face of theſe young Diſciples, made the generality of them turn head, and go every man to his own houſe. They had not ſate down before and conſidered, what it would coſt them to become Chriſtians. We heare the whiſperings of vain perſons. What?* will you go to be Catechized like Children? will ſuch as you go? do you ſee any but Children, and thoſe the Children of ordinary perſons too that come there? *&c. It being not in our power to prevent the throwing of thoſe darts, we ſhall only make it our buſineſs to arme you againſt them.*

1. *In the firſt place. What is ſaid of honour,* That it is more in him that gives, than in him that receiveth it, *is (we are ſure) much more true* of reproach and diſhonour. *It is a poyſon only hurtfull to that ſoul which ſpitteth it, and ſticketh not at all to the face upon which it alighteth. It is that which* comes out of a man, *ſuch as vain words and ſinfull actions, or luſts within a man which defiles him, not what is thrown upon him from the hands of another; It is, and ought to be a ſmall thing to a Chriſtian, to be judged of Men, he ſhould remember that its his* lot *to go through evill as well as* good report.

2. Suppoſe they be moſt of the poorer ſort that ſubmit to this method of inſtruction, *Yet* Hearken our Beloved Brethren, hath not God choſen the poore of this world to be rich in faith, and heires of the Kingdome, which he hath promiſed unto them that love James 2. 5.

him? *The reaſon is not becauſe the richer ſhould not ſubmit to it, but becauſe they are held captive by their luſts, that they will not ſubmit to this inſtruction; And there is a more ſecret cauſe of that too.* Not many wiſe Men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called but God hath choſen. The baſe things of the world; *and things which are deſpiſed* hath God choſen, That no fleſh might glory before the Lord.

3. *It was a ſmart reply which* David *made to* Michal, *mocking him out of a window, while he was dancing before the Arke,* 2 Sam. 6. 20. How glorious (*ſaith ſhe*) was the King of Iſrael to day, who uncovered himſelf in the eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain fellows ſhameleſly uncovereth himſelf? *He replies,* Verſe 21. It was before the Lord, who choſe me before thy Father, and before all his houſe to appoint me a Ruler; therefore I will play before the Lord, and I will be baſe in my own ſight; and of the Maidſervants, which thou haſt ſpoken of, I ſhall be had in honour. *Why ſhould not the ſame ſpirit be found in our Brethren, which was found in the Man according to Gods own heart? why ſhould not they anſwer the* Michals *and* Iſhmaels *of this generation, in the ſame dialect and ſay, It is for the Lords ſake that I am willing to ſubmit to any method of inſtruction, for the Lords ſake who hath commanded me* to bow my eare to underſtanding, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, *for which St.* Paul *accounted,* all things loſs and dung, that he might but win Chriſt? *For the Lords ſake who (I truſt) hath choſen me to obtaine eternall life through the knowledge of his truth, and poſſibly hath caſt off your ſouls, and left you to your own luſts, leſt in ſeeing you ſhould ſee, and hearing underſtand, and your ſouls ſhould convert, and be healed, It is for my* immortall ſouls

ſake

sake, *that I do it (which I know without knowledge cannot be good,* Prov. 19. 2.) If by any meanes I might attaine to the resurrection of the dead. *I will therefore submit to instruction, is this in your eyes* to be vile? *Nay sure (if* Solomon *may be judge) shame belongs to* them who refuse instruction. *I will yet be more vile in this sense, I will be base in my own sight, and not disdaine to be accounted a fool, that I may be wise to eternall salvation. My soul is infinitely more precious to me, than my name amongst the Sons of* Belial. *Of all sober Christians, yea of all who are but morally vertuous,* I shall be had in honour. *Yea those vain persons of whom you speak that they will reproach me, shall honour me in the day of their visitation. Mourning for sin, never destroyed beauty; kneeling at Prayer, never spoiled a silk stocking; nor did a submission to Catechizing, ever hinder any ones preferment in Marriage.*

4. *And lastly, (Brethren,)* If we cannot get over so small a stumbling block, as a scorners tongue in our way to Heaven, how shall we endure a Prison? how shall we (if called to it) resist unto blood? *The Apostle tells us,* That all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions. *Of all persecutions that from the tongue is (doubtless) the least. We have read of some who from this form of* Catechumeni *in* Origen's *School proceeded* Martyrs, *but we never read of any that did so who stumbling at the threshold, would not come into this School.*

3. *There is yet a third Plea, which some put in to excuse them from this piece of duty, and that is from their* naturall infirmity. *Which by a mistake, they nickname* modesty; *this they say will not suffer them, to express their conceptions, especially in a publick Congregation. In this plea Women are chiefly concerned, who make highest pretences to this virtue, and would seem to have monopolized it to their Sex. To which we answer,*

1. That

1. *That we conceive it is a plea insisted upon in this licentious age at a farre lesser advantage, than formerly it might have been urged upon. Heretofore indeed such a modesty had possessed the female world, that a Virgin must not be seen in a Congregation with a face uncovered,* (Rebeccah would not meet Isaac, before she had put on her vaile) *and the violation of this Law of modesty, was such a scandall, that* Tertullian *calls her, that in his times was seen without her vaile in the Congregation,* Caput nundinatitium, pudor ostentatitiæ virginitatis. *None but* Jezebel *then would* paint her self, and look out at a window; *and the very Poets would deride them, as presumed strumpets, who made their breasts naked. We say had this plea been insisted upon in that bashfull age, it might have signified something in reality. But when we consider the immodest liberty taken in these duties, by too many of that Sex, in discovering their nakedness in the sight of the world, yea even in the publick Assemblies, for divine worship (without regard to the Angels) stretching out their wanton necks, and mincing it as they go, conversing with wantons, in mixed dances, yea at publick Taverns and Innes,* &c *We are apt to think, that the guard of modesty, which nature seemed originally to have set upon them, is long since dimissed, and wonder to hear of it any more in the world.*

Lacteas quid præ te fers sine linteo mammillas? Quid hoc est nisi dicere, posce! posce! trado. Pontan.

2. Doth not nature it self teach you, to make modesty give place in cases of necessity, though of no higher concernment than bodily welfare? *And have we not demonstrated a necessity of being instructed in the things of God? or are soul necessities less considerable than those which incumber bodily life or health? may the barres of modesty be honourably passed for the latter, and left for stumbling blocks to the former?*

Neither do we think true modesty *in the least concerned, as an hinderance to this submission. Which of you who make*

make this your plea, should any of us (though before never so many witnesses) enquire of you concerning your health, the welfare of your Parents, or other relations, or your other worldly concernments, would be so overcome with modesty, as not to give us an answer? and why should your modesty *be pleaded only when we come to quary you concerning the things of God, and the concernment of your immortal souls?*

4. *To conclude this therefore, we can easily grant, that there may be a* shamefacedness *in some, which may hinder their submission to this usefull exercise; But as the* Philosopher *will allow nothing of this nature the name of a morall virtue, so much less is this* αἰδὼς, *to be humoured, which is an excessive shame, restraining us from what of it self is praise-worthy and honourable. If therefore any plead this in earnest, we have nothing to do but to tell them, that it is a lust not to be gratified, but mortified. And in very deed, whatsoever of this is reall in any, ariseth meerly from a fear of disgrace, which (as to this thing) will no longer abide in any, than until they be raised to a confidence of their ability to satisfie their duty in it, and be convinced of this as their duty, and the eternall concernment of their souls, that they may not perish* for want of knowledg. *We have (we trust) said enough to press the first thing which we had to request of you. The second was*

2. A mutual assistance from you, as you are governours of others, enabling us to discharge that duty, which we confess our selves to owe unto the Children and Servants committed to your trust. *And this in two things*

1. Your more private preparing them for our work.

2. The exercise of your authority, in requiring their appearance to us when we are waiting upon this service.

As to the first of these, we do desire our Brethren to consider

1. *That besides the common Obligations which arise from the bonds of* naturall affection and common charity, and engageth Parents and Masters, to take care of their

Childrens and Servants ſouls, as well as of their outward being and wellfare; they alſo lye under the obligation of a poſitive divine Law to the performance of what *we deſire of them. The Iſraelites were obliged to take all opportunities to whet the Law of God upon their Children,* Deut. 6. 6, 7. *and to cauſe their Children to underſtand the* Paſſeover, *Exod.* 12. *Both Children and Maſters are charged (in the fourth Commandment) with the ſouls of their Children, and of their Servants; to ſay nothing of the examples of* Abraham, David, *the Mother and Grandmother of* Timothy, *&c.* Elie's *neglect of his Family cauſed the ruine of himſelf and it. Whatever any of our Brethren may fancy, there never comes a Child or Servant into any of their families, but he comes with this warrant from the great Lord of Heaven and Earth.* Keep the ſoul of this Child, this Servant: for if it be miſſing amongſt the number of my ſheep at the great day, through thy neglect in reproving, inſtructing, or timely correcting, or reſtraining it, thy ſoul ſhall go for it.

2. *We beſeech our Brethren to conſider,* That the duty, which we preſs upon them, is within the compaſs of their power. *You cannot teach your Children, or Servants the fear of God, but you may teach them the knowledg of God: you cannot convey grace into their hearts, but you may convey inſtruction into their minds. You cannot bring them to Chriſt, but you may bring them to Church. Doubtleſs the omiſſion of no duties will be ſo ſeverely revenged upon people, as thoſe which even in our lapſed eſtate we have a power to performe, if we want not an heart to them, and refuſe the performance of them.*

3. We dare aſſure every one of you, that in the performance of this duty, you will be like the Husbandman (*of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaketh*) who reapeth, firſt of his own fruit. *Thoſe who know moſt of God will beſt performe their duty to you; we cannot but look upon the undutifullneſs*

of

of your Children, and debauchery of your Servants, as very much caused, from the neglect of your duty, who should have taught them better things; and in your punishment in their miscarriages you may many of you read your iniquity in this neglect of them.

4. *We are sure,* That by this performance of your duty you would much facilitate our work. *The neglect of Masters and Parents, in the instruction and gorvernment of their families, hath almost made the work both of Magistrates and Ministers unpracticable as to the latitude of their duty. Whence is it that your Children or Servants, are either ashamed or afraid, to give any account to us of their knowledg or proficiency under our Preaching to them, but because it is a strange thing to them, to which they were never accustomed at home.*

5. *We might further adde,* That by the practice of this duty you would find no small advantage arising to your own souls, *and this not only in the satisfaction you would have, while you should see their proficiency in the knowledg of God, and you shall in the death, or miscariage of any of them, have the testimony of a good conscience that you have not been defective in your duty to them: But also* in the further confirmation of your own souls *in the truths of God, stirring up your own minds* by way of remembrance. *It will be of the same use to you, that the Jewish* Phylacteries *were to them, by means of which the truths of God will be alwaies kept in the eye of your minds.*

The second thing which we have to beg of you is, The exercise of your authority in commanding and requiring your Children and Servants to appear unto us waiting upon this piece of our Ministry. *And for this we must be the more importunate, untill the Civil Magistrate shall be pleased to interpose his authority, (it being the only means we have to bring our wholesome designe for the good of their souls, to any comfortable issue.)*

We

We would hope the perswading of you to this, should be the easiest part of our work; In our first request we pleaded with you to put off something of your selves, that you might put on Christ, *performe (we mean) your duty to him. Here we aske you but to* put on your selves, *cloathing your selves with, and exercising that due Authority, which God hath given you, over those under your roof. Those who will not put themselves to the inconsiderable trouble, once a week or oftner, to propound a few Questions out of a Catechism to their Children or Servants, in order to so great an end, as we have proved this exercise conducible unto, will doubtless do very little to help them to Heaven. But those who refuse this latter part of their duty, will do much less. We will not suppose that any Master or Parents shall so little understand the Authority, with which God hath invested them, as to tell us, that they cannot make them come. The* Centurions *Servants (of whom we read in the Gospel) were at better command. And unquestionably if the Lord had not thought he had cloathed you with a sufficiency of power over your Children and Servants, he would never have charged it upon you, to take care that they should keep his Sabbath holy.*

We shall adde no more, but commend you all to the Lord, and these things to your serious consideration, imploring the blessing of his grace.

FINIS.

Reader:

Though all due care was used, to prevent thy trouble in the perusall of these Sheets, yet the Printer must (besides failers in stopps, and accents,) beg thy pardon for these following Errataes.

IN the Epist. prefatory. p.9. in marg. l.4. r. δίμαι. l.5. dele δίμαι. l.10. r. ἀπολλυμένους. l.12. r. μεγάλης. p.10. in the Epist. l.19. r. *nor*. In the Art. p.2. l.3. r. *to the*. In the Book. p.1. in marg. r. *circumsonante*. p.3. in marg. r. *retinet*. p. 3. l. 16. r. κατηχήτου. p. 6. l. 9. r. *Catechista*. p. 6. l. 13. r. κατηχήσεις. p. 14. l. 6. r. *passeover*. p. 19. l. 1. r. *indeavoured*. p. 25. in marg. r. *observari*. p. 27. l. 20. r. *parent*. p. 28. l. 33. r. *opportunum*.